TimeWarp

ANDROMEDA ★ TWIN PEAKS ★ BLAKE'S 7

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125

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EXCLUSIVE

FANTASTIC BEASTS ESCAPE in NEW YORK

THE CAST AND CREW ON LEAVING HOGWARTS BEHIND

Warning! Wizard on the loose!

Approach with caution

HARLEY QUINN FROM SIDEKICK TO SUPERSTAR!

BLACK MIRROR SEASON 3

CLASS IN SESSION

"DOCTOR WHO meets BUFFY"

5 MISSING Harry Potter MOMENTS

HUMANS SEASON 2

SYNTHS ON THE RUN!

ON-SET REPORT PAGE 36

STAR TREK

LATEST FROM BRYAN FULLER

Have you seen this man?

ALSO INSIDE

THE TICK
ARRIVAL
CARRIE
MARY POPPINS
ARROW
MOANA
JOCK

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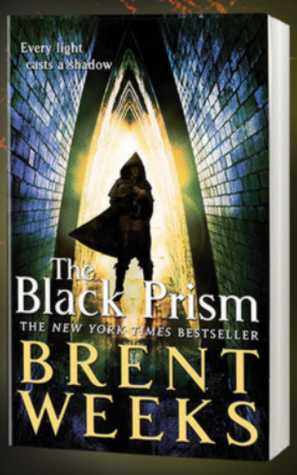
FANTASTIC BEASTS ESCAPE IN NEW YORK

HARLEY QUINN: FROM SIDEKICK TO SUPERSTAR

"DOCTOR WHO MEETS BUFFY"

Over 3 million books sold worldwide

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Out October 2016

The most fun you can have with cloaks on

orbit



Hands up who read *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone* back when it was first released in 1997? Back then, all the Divination classes in the world couldn't have forewarned you about what was in store for the Boy Who Lived: shattered sales records, countless awards, and the hearts and minds of millions worldwide.

But there's a whole world out there beyond *Potter*, part of which can be seen in *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, the first in a planned trilogy chronicling the misadventures of Newt Scamander as he travels to the US, suitcase full of beasties in tow. The books only showed one part of the wizarding world, and now we get to explore another.

As if that wasn't enough, we have exclusive interviews with stars Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston, Alison Sudol, Dan Fogler, Colin Farrell and more as we peer inside what will undoubtedly be one of the biggest films of the year, as well as looking back at the *Harry Potter* books themselves. You couldn't swing a Kneazle without finding something great here.

Magic isn't the only thing that's great in this issue. Also under the microscope are the best of new British TV, with set visits to *Buffy*-inspired *Doctor Who* spin-off *Class*, and the second series of Channel 4's run-away, robotic hit *Humans*, and a one-on-one with *Black Mirror* creators Charlie Brooker and Annabel Jones as they head to Netflix for Season Three. Pair that with features on Disney's *Moana* and Denis Villeneuve's lovely looking *Arrival*, and retrospective articles on the likes of *Andromeda*, *Twin Peaks*, *Blake's 7* and more.

There's something for everyone regardless of their Hogwarts house. Mischief managed.

Steve

Steve Wright
Editor



GET EXCITED ABOUT LEGO BATMAN

Anyone who felt short-changed on the fun front by *Batman V Superman* can rejoice, as the Dark Knight has been cut down to fun size for the absolutely awesome-looking spin-off from *The Lego Movie*. Keeping the spirit of its predecessor alive, animator Chris McKay has been bumped up to directing duties, and he has an absolute wealth of vocal talent to work with: there's Will Arnett and Michael Cera as the dynamic duo themselves, Zach Galifianakis as the Joker (no dead rats for him), Rosario Dawson as Barbara Gordon, Ralph Fiennes playing Alfred, and even Mariah Carey as the Gotham mayor. Talk about building a better Batman...

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THE CAST & CREW ON TAKING MAGIC STATESIDE







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MEET THE TEAM

Q. According to Pottermore, what is your Patronus?



James Hoare
Editor in Chief
A. Orangutan
I'm only a tourist here, my true home is the Discworld.



Steve Wright
Editor
A. Fox
Pros: wily and cunning. Cons: liable to get chased and shot at.



Jonathan Hatfull
Features Editor
A. West Highland Terrier
I didn't want to take the test, so a stubborn dog seems accurate.



Poppy-Jay Palmer
Senior Staff Writer
A. Dolphin
A lot of dolphins are loud, flamboyant showboaters, so I guess that fits.



Jon Wells
Art Editor
A. Siberian cat
I'm normally more of a dog person, but I'll call her Rufus.



Jen Neal
Production Editor
A. Ragdoll cat
Described as 'docile' and 'placid-natured'. It doesn't really fit, if I'm honest.

Portal

Your essential, trustworthy and unrivalled guide to the latest genre happenings



Fuller and the team unveiled the new starship at San Diego Comic-Con.

WORDS **JEN NEAL** INTERVIEWS **ADAM TANSWELL**

STAR TREK: DISCOVERED

Showrunner Bryan Fuller on what to expect from Discovery in the Netflix era





The Discovery looks vastly different to previous starships.

So far, 2016 has been one hell of a year for fans of *Star Trek*. Not only did we get *Star Trek Beyond*; we celebrated the 50th anniversary. With it came the announcement of *Star Trek: Discovery*, run by no other than Bryan Fuller of *Hannibal* and *Pushing Daisies* fame, as well as a regular member of the writing department on *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine*. It's safe to say it's in safe – not to mention exciting – hands.

Originally pencilled in for a CBS All Access release (and added to Netflix for UK viewers the next day) in January 2017, it has now been pushed back until May. In a press release, Fuller and co-executive producer Alex Kurtzman said, "We aim to dream big and deliver, and that means making sure the demands of physical and post-production for a show that takes place entirely in space, and the need to meet an air date, don't result in compromised quality... We evaluated these realities with our partners at CBS and they agreed: *Star Trek* deserves the very best, and these extra few months will help us achieve a vision we can all be proud of."

While waiting an extra four months for a new *Star Trek* when it's already been over a decade since the last TV outing makes us twitch in anticipation, we can't argue with their reasoning. Besides, basically everything Fuller is saying about it fills us with excitement.

"There's been a few rumours going around about where the show is set, and one of the things that was very exciting for me as a *Star Trek* fan was there's an event in *Star Trek* history, in the history of Starfleet, that had been talked about but never really fully explored." This, of course, sparked a bunch of questions of what the event is, but Fuller remained unsurprisingly secretive, though he did say that die-hard fans would "be very happy. *I* am, it is something that I would want to see."

Fuller has previously mentioned that the series will be more serialised than previous incarnations of the TV show, embracing the binge-watching age, especially with the show heading straight onto Netflix, "Well, it's really telling it as though it's a novel, with each episode being a chapter of that novel. And within that chapter is a beginning, middle and an end to that

008 THE EXORCIST



Producer Rupert Wyatt tells us why this will bring back pleasant bad memories

009 ARROW



Mr Terrific himself, Echo Kellum, on officially joining Team Arrow in Season Five

010 IT



As filming wraps, here's the truth about Pennywise's terrifying comeback

013 YONDERLAND



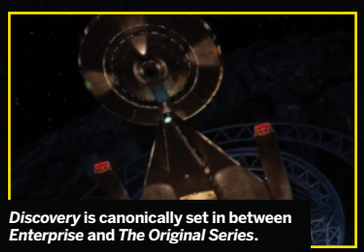
Our on-set report from the long-awaited third series of Sky1's puppet show

"STAR TREK DESERVES THE VERY BEST, AND THESE EXTRA MONTHS WILL HELP US ACHIEVE A VISION WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF" BRYAN FULLER

segment of the story. So we will have episodes that exist by themselves, but are a piece in a much bigger story."

As showrunner, Fuller is keen to adapt the standard template for his own means. "The story that is fascinating for me is we've seen six series now from captains' points of view, and to see a character from a different perspective on a starship, who has a different dynamic relationship with the captain, with subordinates, felt like it was going to give us richer context to have different types of stories with that character... it is an ensemble, but we do have that main female protagonist."

It is something that *Star Trek* has only seen once in its many variants. "*Star Trek* started with a wonderful expression of diversity in its cast. You had a Russian with a black woman and an Asian man among a Vulcan, who is a different kind of diversity. Infinite diversity and infinite combinations, as he would say. So we're absolutely continuing that tradition and to our lead of the show is going to be subject to that same level of who's the best actor, and also what can we say with diversity in every role that we represent on the show."



***Discovery* is canonically set in between *Enterprise* and *The Original Series*.**

And what of the rest of the cast? While *Star Trek* is set in the future (as well as space), the cast rosters are still usually full of human characters, with the aliens largely coming in to the guest-starring roles. But Fuller is adamant this is going to change, "We'll probably have a few more aliens than you normally do in a *Star Trek* cast... usually you've got one person with a bumpy forehead, and then seven other people who look relatively human. We wanted to paint the picture of a Starfleet that is indicative of a universe where we're encountering people that are different than we are."

But it isn't just the alien races that he is aiming to represent. "We're having a gay character. And what was very interesting for me, going into this process as a gay man who worked on *Voyager*... I still have the hate mail that [we] got because there was a rumour that Jeri Ryan's character [Seven of Nine] was going to be gay. I kept it because I was like, 'If I ever do a *Star Trek* show, there's going to be a gay character.'" He went on to say, "We still have a lot of issues with women and race and how that's going to be 250 years in the future when, hopefully, this world gets its shit together and equality is more of a thing that is accepted."

All we have to say is even though Fuller's shows have a tendency to be cut short, there is no arguing with their quality. In Fuller we trust.

Star Trek: Discovery will air on Netflix in May 2017.



WHAT TO EXPECT IN STD

Bryan Fuller is deliberately cagey, but here are some of the elements we know will be appearing in STD – just not how – and how much the public want them...

37% ACTUAL DIVERSITY
Not only has Fuller said he wants to show a world 250 years in the future when we have hopefully gotten our acceptance shit together; he's also penning a lead female character.

35% NEW ALIENS
Naming one called Saru, Fuller was careful not to give away any more details.

13% THERE WILL BE MORE *WHISPERS* SEX
In the words of Bryan Fuller "There's a reason we call it 'STD.'"

15% OLD FACES
He hasn't slammed the door on the possibility of young versions of old *Star Trek* faces making their appearances. Come on Karl Urban. *crosses fingers*

© Getty



TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER

© Joe Viles/FOX

Director & executive producer Rupert Wyatt on The Exorcist TV series

WORDS KATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN

After the success of *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes*, Rupert Wyatt has made the move to the small screen to reimagine another classic. Created and written by Jeremy Slater, *The Exorcist* is set 40 years after the events of William Friedkin's film, and exists in the same universe. We spoke to the director about his approach to the pilot episode and his fascination with real-life exorcisms…

Why do you think people are still so fascinated with the story told in William Peter Blatty's 1971 novel?

Like all great stories, it's a great reflection of us as a species, and also us as a society. We're telling a story which is very much of the now, about a city that has a very rich and varied history.

When Friedkin made the original film, the United States was going through various financial crises, and it was the early days of Vietnam, so it wasn't a totally different world. It's always interesting to me when the world is in a place, especially economically or politically, where there are world events that play into the notions of evil as becoming more pervasive in our society. What inevitably happens is that entertainment as an art form mirrors that.

Why did you set the TV show in Chicago?

I was a big driver of setting the [show] in Chicago. I thought it was a historically vibrant American city that has a big Catholic community. The church is very powerful there, but it's dealing with modern controversies and scandals. It's not the great institution that it once was.

On political levels there are aspects of corruption in Chicago – there has been all the way back to Al Capone. It's a city where if you were to say the Devil were to infiltrate our world and look to proliferate on a pandemic level, Chicago would be it for me.

Was it important to you to give the show a cinematic feel?

I didn't want a varnished look. TV can sometimes have a gloss to it, but with the case of *The Exorcist* I wanted to find something that was really unvarnished and light it in that way so Chicago in February was perfect for that. We looked to a lot of films specifically shot in Chicago in the winter like *Road To Perdition*.

Is there one particular character as a storyteller you latched on to?

The exorcists themselves I thought were incredibly fascinating. We researched it in as grounded way as possible. We talked to priests who wanted to remain nameless. They are recruited individuals. They are trained to carry out these actions and a lot of people who do this job are very secretive people. They keep themselves to themselves and they don't advertise what they do. It's a bit like working for the secret service in some ways. We approached it a little like a religious James Bond.

The Exorcist will air on Fox from 20 October.



The creators of the show spoke to priests about real-life exorcists as part of their research.

© 2016 Fox Broadcasting Co.

AN OLD FRIEND FOR DINNER

The Hannibal cook book is here! Bon appétit…

We all miss *Hannibal*, but while we wait for Bryan Fuller and co to work out a way to bring Dr Lecter and Will back, there's something to help us through the grieving process and make our dinner tables a little bit more special.

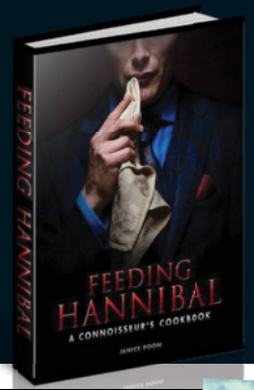
Hannibal's genius food stylist, Janice Poon, has brought her incredible vision to us with *Feeding Hannibal: A Connoisseur's Cookbook*. Inside, you will find the recipes to the cannibal chef's dashing dishes, without the element of cannibalism.

"The Fannibals started a dialogue in the comments section of my blog saying, 'This would make a great cookbook,' and a couple of publishers approached me," Poon tells us. "It was complicated, because the properties are owned by so many different companies, so I wrote to [producer] Loretta Ramos, and the doors just flew open! It was a train that just pulled out of the station so fast I barely had time to pack!"

Hungry Fannibals will soon be able to recreate the amazing dishes from the show, and Poon tells us that she's thrilled to be able to bring such an important element of the show closer to its fans.

"*Hannibal* was really different, and I think the 'something' about it, was everything about it. You love it so much you could eat it! And being able to reproduce something in a story that you love just brings it that much closer to you."

Feeding Hannibal: A Connoisseur's Cookbook by Janice Poon is out now, published by Titan Books.



WARP SPEED

Sam Neill is in *Thor: Ragnarok*. Or he might not be. He's such a card on Twitter, there's no way of knowing until we see him grinning in the background.



DAME HELEN MIRREN DOES HORROR

We don't often see the great dame in **SciFiNow**, but she's starring in *Winchester*, a haunted house movie from the makers of *Predestination*.

6 Actors currently on board for *Pacific Rim 2*: John Boyega, Scott Eastwood, Adria Arjona, Jing Tian, Cailee Spaeny and Levi Meaden.





© Lesley Bryce

MR TERRIFIC WILL SEE YOU NOW

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

Echo Kellum on joining Team Arrow full-time

Season Four of *Arrow* might not have hit all the high notes we've come to expect, but it did at least provide us with a breakout star in the form of Echo Kellum's Curtis Holt.

Initially an ally of Felicity (Emily Bett Rickards) at PalmerTech, Holt quickly became indispensable to both the show and Team Arrow thanks to his inherent likeability and natural ability to be – rather aptly – terrific, with his standout moments including creating a device that allowed Felicity to walk again and assisting her in the small matter of preventing a nuclear holocaust. Now, he's returning as a series regular, and he couldn't be happier.

"It's really blown out my expectations of what I thought it was going to be," says Kellum. "It was so open and welcoming... I think that was a big part of why I wanted to come back as a series regular, knowing that I'd get to work with such a great cast and such a great crew, producers and whatnot."

Curtis will represent the middle ground between new recruits Wild Dog (Rick Gonzalez) and Artemis (Madison McLaughlin), although he won't be suiting up just yet. "He's dealing with the ramifications of Felicity being fired from PalmerTech and the juxtaposition of work and home life with his husband Paul. In Season Five, which takes place five months after Season Four, he's assisting in the Arrow Cave, but not fully committed to being a member of Team Arrow. Then some things happen that change his perspective."

This change will lead to him suiting up as DC hero Mr Terrific – something he can't hide his delight at. "The comic-book nerd in me is on Cloud Nine. I am just so excited to see Curtis in that realm and what he brings to superherodom, and then seeing what drives him, what strengths he has versus his weaknesses out in the field, so I'm so excited to explore the transition."

However, he's going to make us wait for it: "Don't expect him to be kicking ass; he's going to have to build to get to a place where he feels comfortable as a superhero."

Arrow: Season Five will air from 26 October on Sky1.

WIN! A DARK BUNNY TEES GIFT BUNDLE

Set up in October 2009, Dark Bunny Tees has grown from a one-man business into one of the world's best-loved proprietors of film, TV and pop culture-inspired apparel around.

Unlike other companies, they go beyond simply printing film logos on blank t-shirts; Dark Bunny Tees' clothing are created by film fans for film fans, incorporating subtle nods and Easter eggs that movie buffs will appreciate.

Now, we at **SciFiNow** have joined forces with Dark Bunny Tees to offer you the chance to win some of their limited edition merchandise. Up for grabs are:

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Which film features the USS Sulaco?

A) Star Trek: The Motion Picture
B) Blade Runner
C) Alien













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26 Gallons of blood were tipped on actress Dana DeLorenzo in just one scene of *Ash Vs Evil Dead* Season Two



After what has felt like an eternity, *Troll Hunter* director André Øvredal's *The Autopsy Of Jane Doe* has a release date of 21 December, with a UK one to follow.

18 NOVEMBER

When interactive exhibition '*Star Wars*: Identities' will be hitting the O2 arena with over 200 original costumes, props, models and artwork.



6 THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT IT

What to expect from the Stephen King remake

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



ANDRÉS MUSCHIETTI MADE IT HIS OWN

We were down when *True Detective*'s Cary Fukunaga left the project, but *Mama* director Andy Muschietti has jumped on board. From what we've seen, he's being faithful to the book, and the lengthy shoot is encouraging. This is worth doing right, dammit.



© andy_muschietti

BILL SKARSGÅRD IS PENNYWISE

The *Hemlock Grove* star stepped into Will Poulter's clown shoes after Fukunaga bailed, and we're definitely impressed with his look so far. The actor has described him as "inhumane" and spoken about how Pennywise finds scaring kids to death "funny." Hello, nightmare fuel.



© andy_muschietti

THE KIDS LOOK EXACTLY RIGHT

Anyone who has read the book will tell you that the casting of The Losers' Club is just as crucial as that of Pennywise, so we're reassured by the presence of *Midnight Special*'s Jaeden Lieberher and *Stranger Things*' Finn Wolfhard. Wyatt Olef, Sophia Lillis, Jack Dylan Grazer, Chosen Jacobs and Jeremy Ray Taylor complete the group.



THE PLAN IS STILL FOR TWO MOVIES

Part of the reason why *It* was in development for so long is that the book is massive, and splitting it in two was a sensible idea. It seems like that idea survived the Fukunaga-Muschietti changeover, but they're going to wait and see how this one does before green-lighting a second. You'll notice it's not called *It: Part One* yet...



THEY'VE NOTICED STRANGER THINGS' SUCCESS

If you watched Netflix's *Stranger Things*, its many Stephen King references – *It* in particular – wouldn't have escaped your notice. At the TCAs, producer Dan Lin said of *It*, "A great analogy is actually *Stranger Things*," which shows that what goes around, really goes around.



© barbaramus

INSTAGRAM HAS BEEN A GOLDMINE

While the official look at Skarsgård in costume as Pennywise was most welcome, both Andy and producer Barbara Muschietti have been dropping lots of awesome teasers on Instagram, including locations and this incredible Pennywise-in-a-box. Get following!

It will be released in cinemas on 8 September 2017.



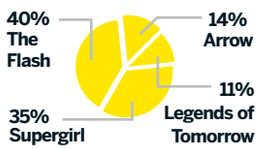
Jon Bernthal's Netflix Punisher has found his first adversary. We don't who it is yet, but he'll be played by Ben Barnes, currently starring in *Westworld*.

4 The number of actors to have been cast in the remake of *The Crow*, with Jason Momoa succeeding Bradley Cooper, Luke Evans and Jack Huston.

The Toxic Avenger is the latest superhero to be getting a new big-screen update, with *Sausage Party* director Conrad Vernon helming the remake.



Which CW superhero series are you most looking forward to seeing return?



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FIVE THINGS WITH

PETER SERAFINOWICZ

The actor/videogame fanatic on The Tick, Deus Ex and more

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

1 Mankind Divided

When Peter Serafinowicz isn't acting, he can usually be found playing videogames, which is why he was so keen to lend his voice to *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*. "They got in touch with my agent, and knew I was a big videogame fan and I'd done some voice stuff, and also that I was a really talented actor," he says modestly. "I think those were the reasons that they asked. I've been a fan of the series since the very first game, which is amazing."

2 Indie gamer

Though he loves games like *Deus Ex*, his gamer heart lies in the indie arena. "It's where the interesting, new ideas are coming from. I read an article the other day, something like '20 upcoming indie games', and each one to me sounded incredible. I thought, 'God, I wouldn't have heard of any of these had I not come across this webpage!' There's one called *Cuphead*. All the characters in the game are hand-drawn in the style of cartoons from the Twenties, I love that it exists!"

3 The Tick is here

As well as gracing our consoles with his voice, Serafinowicz is back on TV screens with his face and antennas in Amazon's *The Tick* series, based on Ben Edlund's hit comics. "Ben's writing is so beautiful," he tells us. "He has these weird, beautiful, poetic sentences that have structure and logic in them, but always feel like a complex, futuristic, monorail system. I've never known anyone to write like him. It was quite something to be trusted with this character and to give my interpretation of him. I loved it."

4 Geek icon

With roles in the likes of *The Phantom Menace*, *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, *Spaced*, *Shaun Of The Dead*, and now *The Tick*, he has steadily become something of a geek icon. "I didn't know I had that title!" he says. "Was that one of the queen's birthday honours this year? I missed it! I really honestly haven't thought about it before. I'm incredibly flattered to have that title! It's definitely the camp I'm in. It was the gang I was in at school. I'm happy to still be in that gang."

5 Something strange

Serafinowicz tries to keep on top of the latest genre series. When we spoke to him, he'd only seen one episode of *Stranger Things*, but he was eager to discuss how good it is. "I really loved it," he tells us. "Although because of... that particular style and era, I can't get inside the mum's head and worry about her son like she is, like you would do in a conventionally placed drama. Also, my favourite character in the episode got killed at the end! I was disappointed!"

Deus Ex: Mankind Divided is out now, while the pilot episode of *The Tick* is available to watch on Amazon.

SciFiNow Vault



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Distributor: GB Eye **Website:** www.gbeye.com **RRP:** £8.99 each

Drink your morning (or afternoon – whenever) beverage in style with these lovely mugs from DC's officially licensed range. Here, we have Harley Quinn and Jay Garrick in their classic costumes.



STAR WARS YEAR BY YEAR/ COMPLETE LOCATIONS

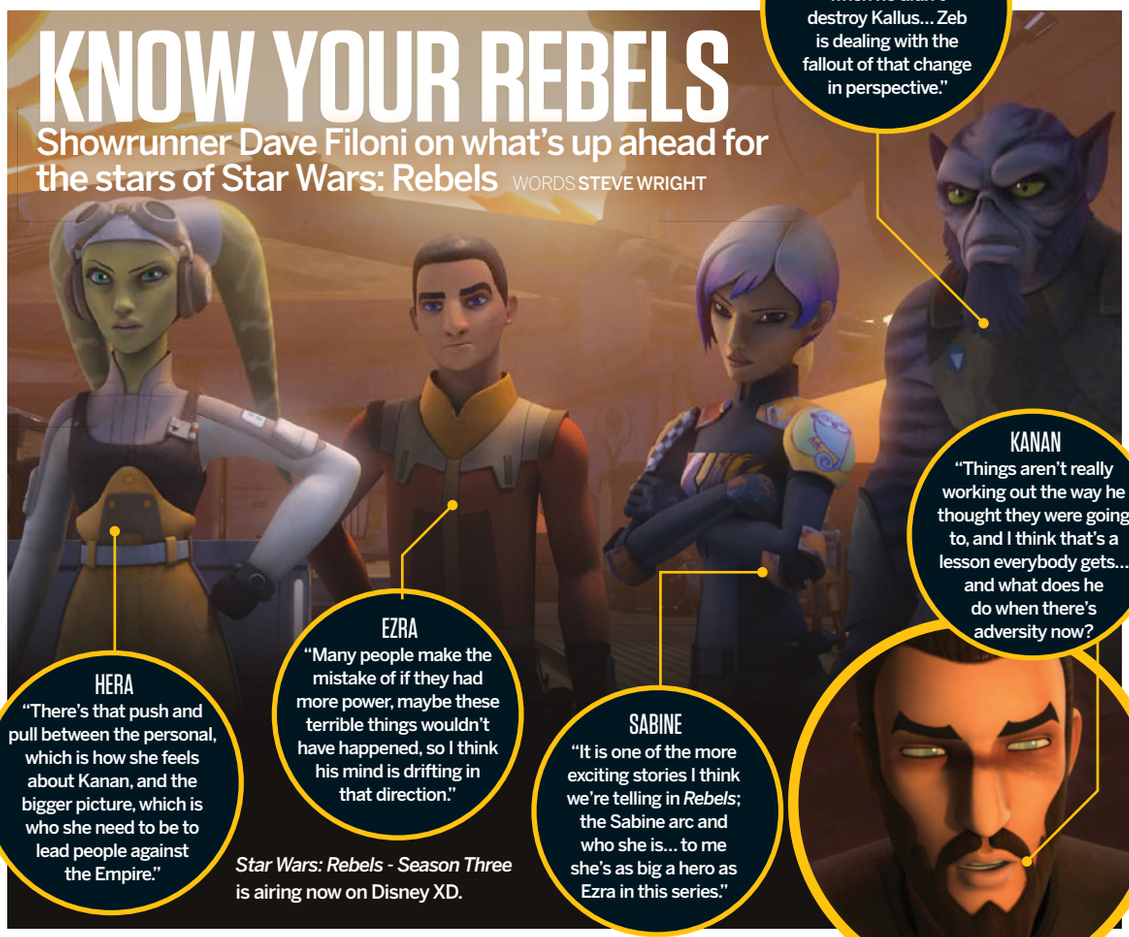
Publisher: Dorling Kindersley **Website:** www.dk.com **RRP:** £35/£30

Repositories of *Star Wars* lore for fans and newcomers alike, these unique compendiums from Dorling Kindersley have been re-released with added *Force Awakens* content. We have a good feeling about these...

KNOW YOUR REBELS

Showrunner Dave Filoni on what's up ahead for the stars of Star Wars: Rebels

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT



ZEB
"He had a big turning point last season when he didn't destroy Kallus... Zeb is dealing with the fallout of that change in perspective."

KANAN
"Things aren't really working out the way he thought they were going to, and I think that's a lesson everybody gets... and what does he do when there's adversity now?

HERA
"There's that push and pull between the personal, which is how she feels about Kanan, and the bigger picture, which is who she need to be to lead people against the Empire."

EZRA
"Many people make the mistake of if they had more power, maybe these terrible things wouldn't have happened, so I think his mind is drifting in that direction."

SABINE
"It is one of the more exciting stories I think we're telling in *Rebels*; the Sabine arc and who she is... to me she's as big a hero as Ezra in this series."

Star Wars: Rebels - Season Three is airing now on Disney XD.

V IS FOR VLOG...AND VAMPIRES

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

James Moran tells us about his Dracula-updating web series

It seems like everybody's got a vlog these days, so why should someone like Mina Murray be any different? Yes, the character has stepped from the pages of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and into the 21st century in James Moran's new web series, *Mina Murray's Journal*.

This modern Mina is in her early 20s, sharing a flat with her friend Lucy, working at one of the top three estate agencies in the country, and she's just been offered the chance to go to Romania on a work trip. We can all guess where this is going.

"It mainly popped into my head as a fun way to update the book and tell it in a completely new way," Moran tells us. "And the first decision I made was to have Mina as the main character – I always found her and Lucy far more interesting than Jonathan and the 800 other stoic men, and wanted to give them all the fun stuff."

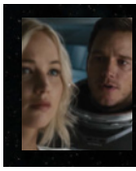
In addition to updating the time period and journaling methods, Moran brings some of the sexual subtext to the fore, as Mina declares that she's bisexual in the first episode. "That was an early decision to have Mina be an out and proud bisexual, but then just not have to refer to it much because it doesn't define who she is; it's just part of her – representation is very important to me, as a straight white male I obviously have plenty of on-screen people like me, so I have a responsibility not to just populate my stuff with more of the same," he tells us.

"And Lucy has her own sexuality, which isn't discussed up front; she's not as brave as Mina yet. That will come up more later, obviously I don't want to jump to the next part of the story too early, but I think it's pretty clear early on who Lucy would like to be with – but will she ever find the courage to say anything?"

We'll have to keep watching to find out!

You can watch *Mina Murray's Diary* on YouTube now.





12 MILLION
The number of views on the trailer for *Passengers*, starring Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt.

The worldwide air date for *Iron Fist*, Marvel's next Netflix series, has been announced as 17 March 2017. Mark that down in your diary.



THE BATMAN
The title of the first Batman solo film starring Ben Affleck. Simple but descriptive.

The Tick has officially been given a full series order from Amazon. Praise Serafinowicz!



National treasure Stephen Fry joins the cast as Cuddly Dick.

ADVENTURES IN YONDERLAND

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER**

The cast of Sky1's family favourite on what's next for Debbie & Elf in Series Three...

The whole of the *Yonderland* cast – Martha Howe-Douglas, Mathew Baynton, Simon Farnaby, Jim Howick, Laurence Rickard and Ben Willbond – were back on set in Wimbledon this last summer, wigs, puppets and all, to film more hilarious nonsense for the show's third series.

After a few narrow escapes involving wish-granting trees, the evil Imperatrix and weapons of mass destruction, Debbie Maddox (Howe-Douglas) and Elf (Bayton) are back to partake in more adventures. When we talk to the team on set just after filming a spoof music video for villain Negatus' (Farnaby) band Hot Eagle – a couple of them still in wigs, false beards and leather trousers – they're all giggles.

"We love our other work through the year, but there's something about working together," says Rickard. "It's a tricky show to write and it's a lot of work, and going into pre-production it can be quite tough, but as soon as you think about starting to film again... the hours are very long, but it feels like a holiday because you're hanging out with your mates."

"It's a love project, really," adds Howick.

With such a large core cast, and all the bodies that make up the props department, the puppeteers, hair and make-up and more, the *Yonderland* team often has trouble finding time to do it all. "Put it this way: *Star Wars VIII* has shifted its dates," jokes Willbond.

In truth, every member of *Yonderland*'s small puppet team is actually working on the new *Star Wars* trilogy. "That was a genuine thrill, seeing our puppet team in that blue font in *Star Wars*," says Howick.

"It was a bit like they worked for Bletchley Park, just because no one talks about it," adds Willbond.

The cast is getting bigger this series; Anthony Head is returning to reprise his Series Two role as Nigel, while national treasure Stephen Fry is joining the Yonderlanders as a fresh face.

"I still can't believe that [Stephen agreed to do it]!" says Howe-Douglas. "He's such a lovely man, and was so generous to us and supportive of us. He was tailoring the script and, coming from him, it was amazing. He didn't just come on set, say his lines and then go; he really got involved. We thought it might be like having a teacher on set, but he totally embraced the group. He was brilliant."



Elf and co are back for Series Three.

In the new series, Fry plays an Elder who has returned to Yonderland after being imprisoned by Imperatrix, rather cheekily named Cuddly Dick. "He was based on Dickie Attenborough," explains Farnaby. "He looks really cuddly, like Dickie Attenborough as Santa, so we started calling him Dick. What if Dick comes in? We didn't realise until we'd written it down. Then people started doing it on purpose."

Being a family show, the cast/writers have to occasionally reel it back a bit when it comes to innuendo. But sometimes a good double entendre does make it to the final cut. "If people talk to us in the street, it's often people going, 'Thank you very much, I just had to explain [this joke] to my kids!'" laughs Rickard.

"As a rule, we say the comedy is whatever you bring to it. If there are young people watching, we'd never try to teach them something they shouldn't know. You can view it completely innocently, or you can view it with adult eyes and hopefully find another layer."

Watch *Yonderland* Series Three on Sunday evenings on Sky1.



The puppet team behind *Yonderland* is also working on the new *Star Wars* trilogy.

WTF,YL?

Yonderland's weirdest creations...

THE PARVULI

These adorable little fluff-balls serenaded our hero with their 'Ode To Debbie' song.



KRAFTWERK

Series Two had a brilliant futurist-electro tribute for no apparent reason.



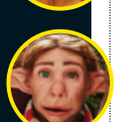
THE NINNIES

This race of potato sack-wearing idiots needed Debbie to find a new Grand Who-Ha.



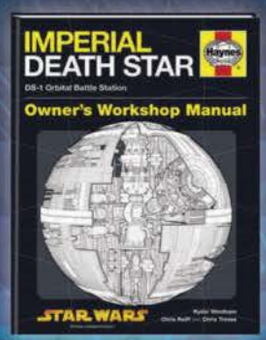
ELF'S FACE

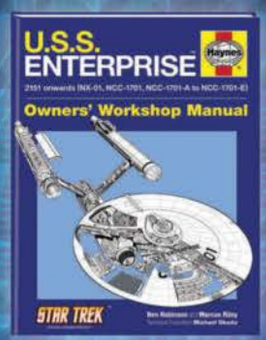
It's taken three series, but *Yonderland*'s crew says it's got Elf's face right this time.

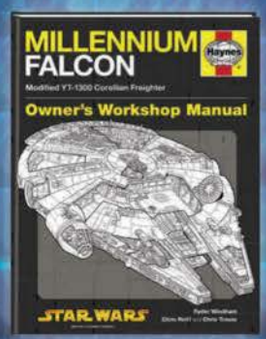


Haynes

A WORLD OF INFORMATION





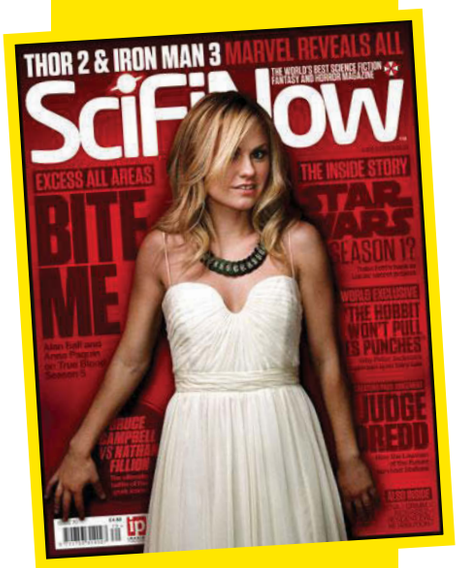




WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED

Haynes shows you how

www.haynes.co.uk



MEMORY BANK

Welcome to Memory Bank, the corner of the magazine where we look back on pages of issues past to see what on earth was going on in the world of sci-fi. This month, we're flicking through issue 70.

Our cover star, Sookie Stackhouse (known in the real world as Anna Paquin) joined Alexander Skarsgård, Stephen Moyer and Alan Ball to talk Season Five of *True Blood*. "There's a fantastic sex scene this season," said Ball, "maybe the best sex scene we have ever done." What a claim.

Elsewhere, we panicked at the assumption that Robert Downey Jr probably won't want to play Iron Man forever. Kevin Feige suggested that if Downey did decided to fly the penthouse, Marvel would do a James Bond and bring in someone else. But considering that Downey has since appeared in *Iron Man 3*, *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Captain America: Civil War*, and has *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Avengers: Infinity War* lined up, we guess we freaked out over nothing.

Speaking of giants of genre, we counted down our top 15 geek icons. The winner, with a staggering cult rating score of 18, was Nathan Fillion (nabbing five out of five for 'self-parody' and 'geekiest role'), closely followed by *Evil Dead*'s Bruce Campbell with 17 (and full marks for 'defining role' and 'fan following').

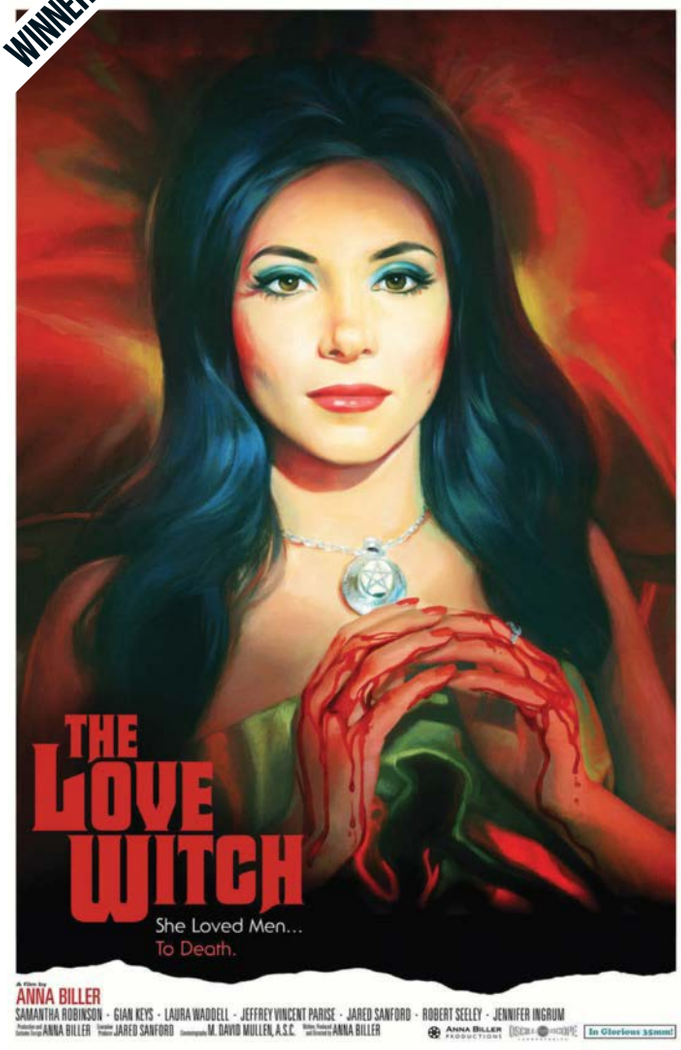
We also celebrated the late great Christopher Lee in our 'Fantasy Icon' regular feature, and it was jam-packed with fascinating facts. Did you know that Lee was fluent in German Spanish, French and Italian, and could get by in Swedish, Russian and Greek? Did you know he shared a birthday with Vincent Price? 27 May, in case you were wondering.

BEST OF THE BILLBOARDS

Celebrating the best, worst and weirdest movie posters out there

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER**

WINNER



THE LOVE WITCH

This month, the winner could never have been anything else. Everything about it is glorious. Just look at that divine artwork. Look at the stunning font. Look at the border, and the subtle, dripping blood on Elaine's hands. We've seen true celestial beauty, and it's the poster for *The Love Witch*.

RUNNER UP



TONIGHT SHE COMES

Is that a lovely little four-shade lino printing we spy? The use of red just makes it pop in a way that no other colour can. Drool.

RUNNER UP



BLESSED ARE THE CHILDREN

We're getting Stephen King vibes from this spooky but dainty masterpiece. It probably rips off at least three other posters, but we don't care.

WEIRDEST



DEAD AWAKE

This beaut for *Dead Awake* gets the 'weirdest' award for how odd it makes us feel whenever we look at it. Seriously, it's giving us phantom spiders; we can feel them crawling around everywhere. That one frantic teardrop leaking from Jocelin Donahue just adds so much extra. Nice work, *Dead Awake* team.

THE WORST



MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

It's not that it's bad as such; it's just that it doesn't really fit in with how the rest of the film has been advertised. We started off with colourful but gothic-y posters that showed off each character's own peculiarity. Now, we've got the same, but in black and white minimalist Banksy form. While we would love this for another film, it just doesn't sit right with the one they've been matched to.





FOR THE LOVE OF SCI-FI

Convention organiser Andy Kleek tells us why you should be attending For The Love Of Sci-Fi

What is it that makes it stand out from other conventions?

We are completely unique from any other convention or comic con. For so long now it has been the norm at conventions to simply have a mixture of traders, cosplay, signings and Q&As. We know our customers want more than this.

Our convention's philosophy is to provide an exciting theme park experience for fans, along with the usual things you find at a convention. We build fully animatronic movie props and sets, and we book the biggest movie stars and comic-book creators. We also feature a 67-piece orchestra that plays all your favourite sci-fi themes – this really is something else, and makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand to attention.

Other attractions include arcades, fairs, cosplay groups with changing areas and a cloakroom, merchandise stands, the world-famous Cantina cocktail bar, artists, gaming, a children's area with kids entertainers, rides, autistic-friendly quiet areas, and as it's Christmas, even a grotto and live reindeer for the children.

What notable attractions, exhibits and guests do you have planned this year?

We have built a fully animatronic Optimus Prime [from the *Transformers* movies], which customers can speak to and interact with. Project Prime is a two-year project, and this year his head will be ready for people to talk to and interact with – his body will be made in 2017, and feature on next year's event. When fully erected he will stand at 32 feet tall.

A fully animatronic ET that can interact with humans is also a feature. His neck extends, his finger and chest glow, and he can walk and talk with full facial movement. This is one of its kind, and really pushes the boundaries of animatronic prop builds. Other fully interactive animatronic builds include the ABC Warrior from *Judge Dredd*, Dobby, Slimer and a fully operational Powerloader you can actually step inside!

What is the best thing about running a con?

The look on people's faces and the feedback you get from happy customers, it's fun building and working on projects like this. It's also very hard work and expensive, but it's pleasing to see the end result after 12 months of hard work.

For info on all builds and props, visit the website: **www.fortheloveofsci-fi.com.**



The attractions include animatronic props and sets.

For The Love Of Sci-Fi
3 December
Bowlers Exhibition Centre, Manchester, M17 1SN
Fortheloveofsci-fi.com
Price: £10-£33 for adults, £12-£20 for children, £50-£80 for family tickets



There's something for everyone at For The Love Of Sci-Fi.

DAYS OF FUTURE NOW

Here are some upcoming UK conventions that you can't afford to miss...

ArmadaCon 28
4-6 November
Future Inns, Plymouth
www.ArmadaCon.org
Price: £5-£30
Running since 1988, this Plymouth-based sci-fi and fantasy con is packed with guest panels, auctions and more.

Bristol Anime and Gaming Con
5-6 November
Future Inns, Bristol
www.BristolAnimeCon.com
Price: £9-£16
This all-inclusive con is perfect for anyone with a love of all things anime, gaming, comics and cosplay.

DEVCON
12 November
Torquay Town Hall
www.facebook.com/events/1639311353050057/
Price: £3
Converse about all things comics and cosplay with fellow Devonians at this one-day event.

Doki Doki
12 November
Sugden Sports Centre
www.DokiDokiFestival.com
Price: £10-£12
Immerse yourself in traditional and modern Japanese culture, and then relax at the cosplay after-party.

Novacon 46
11-13 November
Park Inn Hotel, Nottingham
www.Novacon.org.uk
Price: £12-£46
Bask in the glow of classic SF at the UK's longest-established regional science fiction convention.

Pandorica 2016
18-20 November
Future Inns, Bristol
www.fantomfilms.co.uk/events/eventsmain.htm
Price: £69-£99
Celebrate all things *Doctor Who* in style, but be quick! It's limited to only 100 attendees.

Storybrooke 2
18-20 November
Renaissance London Heathrow Hotel
www.RogueEvent.co.uk/Wordpress/Storybrooke-2
Price: £77-£120
Special guests at this *Once Upon A Time* celebration include Keegan Connor Tracy and Eion Bailey.

MCM Birmingham
19-20 November
The NEC, Birmingham
www.MCMComicCon.com/Birmingham
Price: £11-£30
The special guests list so far includes *2001: A Space Odyssey* stars Kier Dullea and Gary Lockwood.

FantastiCon
19-20 November
Guild Hall, Hull
www.FantastiCon.co.uk
Price: £8-£40
Get your fill of collectables and fudge at this awesome festival of all things geeky.

Hyper Japan Christmas Market
25-27 November
Tobacco Dock, London
www.HyperJapan.co.uk
Price: £15-£43
Go for the cosplay parade; stay for the food, music, fashion and festivities.



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This month, we've played host to the new trailer for Darren Lynn Bousman's grim mystery horror *Abattoir*, starring the likes of Jessica Lowndes, Joe Anderson, Lin Shaye and Dayton Callie, as well as the trailer for black-and-white indie horror *Darling*, directed by the brilliant Mickey Keating and starring Lauren Ashley Carter.

Elsewhere, Chris Pine fiddled with his naked toes as we spoke to him, Zachary Quinto, Sofia Boutella, Karl Urban, John Cho and Justin Lin about all things *Star Trek*. They even sorted themselves into their Hogwarts houses, because why not?

Celebrate the beginning of *Arrow* Season Five with Jen Neal as she talks to the lovely, very Canadian Stephen Amell about Oliver Queen, Felicity Smoak, and his appearance as Casey Jones in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows*.

Dive into our earlier archives for reviews of the biggest blockbusters of the last year, including *Batman V Superman*, *Deadpool* and *10 Cloverfield Lane*, as well as exclusive interviews with the likes of Elijah Wood, Sarah Wayne Callies, Vin Diesel, Michael Caine and the cast of *Sense8*.

But that's not all. Subscribe today for more exclusive news, interviews, reviews and the rest of it in a year that has been jam-packed with genre TV and films to get excited about!

COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

Send yo[illegible]splay to @SciFiNow
or Fa[illegible]com/SciFiNow



LIGHTNING

COSPLAYER: HWANNI **FROM:** SOUTHAMPTON **PHOTO:** JAMES SHEPPARD **FACEBOOK:** /KINGDOMCRAFTS

1 THE CHARACTER

I love Lightning's determination to protect her sister and also how badass she is in general. I really like the design of this outfit in particular, as it feels both powerful and graceful at the same time. It feels like armour, but flows with the wind when you run. When you are playing the game you do a lot of fighting, but you do a lot of running and sneaking as well. It works for all actions.

2 THE COSTUME

There was a lot to consider when making the costume; it was vital keeping a checklist of all the different parts. To help with the main bodice, I had previously experimented with corset-making, which I applied to the outfit. Hunting around for the right kinds of fabric takes time, but is so worth the effort for the end result! I ended up remaking the outfit twice, as I discovered better techniques.

3 THE DESIGN

I wanted to keep the accuracy to the original source material as much as possible, keeping in mind that the costume needed to fit me. I referenced as many sources as possible, breaking down each element. I even looked at how the cosplay outfit could be put together piece by piece to keep a feeling of how the character would wear the outfit in the most realistic manner.

4 THE ACCESSORIES

A lot of the accessories had been made from foam, thermoplastic (Worbla) or Fimo clay, most being inspired by Kamui Cosplay. The sword/shield had been made from foam and foam board, which I carved and covered in Worbla, finishing with acrylic paint and gloss varnish. Studying Animation Production, my goal was to capture the strong shapes of her design as I would with a drawing.

HOT TOPICS

Your most-read posts on SciFiNow.co.uk



ROGUE ONE FINDS NEW COMPOSER
tinyurl.com/hpcz65o



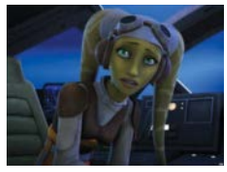
DANA DELORENZO ON ASH VS EVIL DEAD SEASON 2
tinyurl.com/jj2kg5q



ARQ IS A "PERSONAL TIME-TRAVEL STORY"
tinyurl.com/jmbnx7p

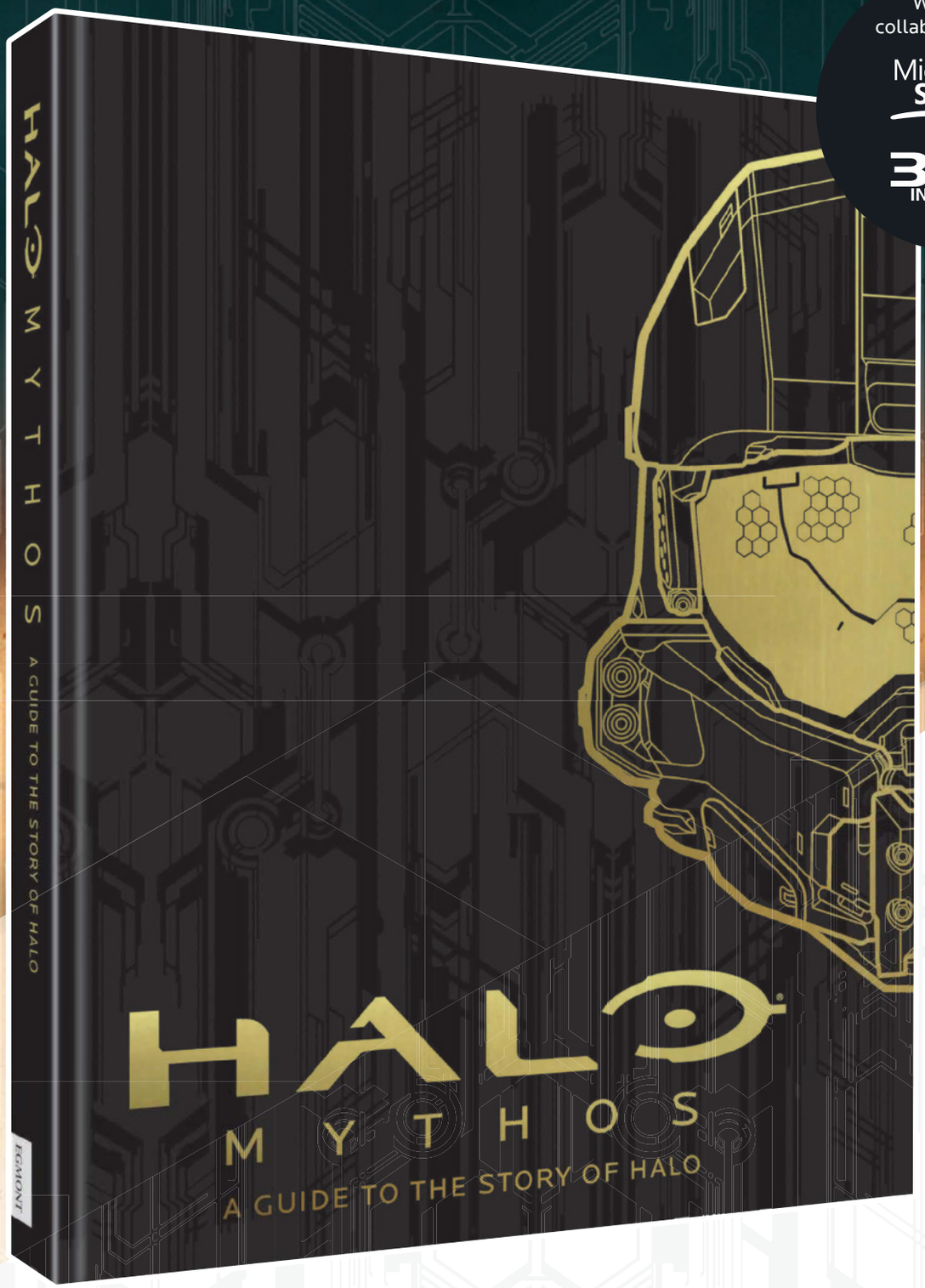


POWER RANGERS MOVIE FINDS ITS ALPHA 5
tinyurl.com/hkp4w9w



REBELS SEASON 3 "IS EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.5"
tinyurl.com/h7zwt8s

TRIVIA *X FACTOR* WINNER LEONA LEWIS RECORDED A SONG, 'MY HANDS', FOR *FINAL FANTASY XIII*.



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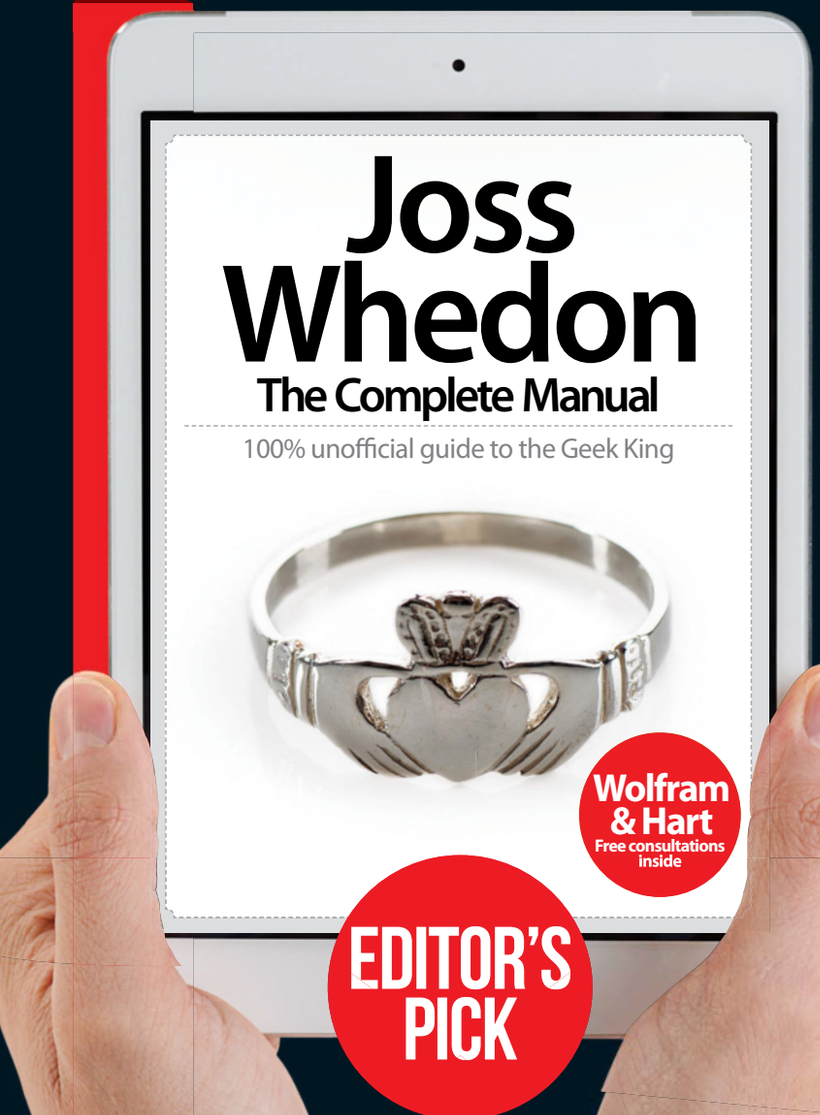




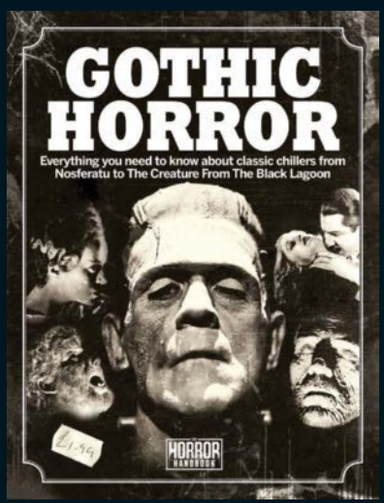


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PERCIVAL GRAVES

Head auror and director of Magical Security at the Magical Congress of the United States of America (MACUSA), Graves leads the hunt for magizoologist Newt Scamander across New York after he accidentally releases a horde of magical creatures.

A Newt Beginning

THERE'S MAGIC IN THE AIR. WE SPOKE TO THE **CAST AND CREW** OF **FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM** ABOUT SPELLS, METAPHORS AND OUR NEXT JOURNEY INTO THE **WIZARDING WORLD...**

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER** INTERVIEWS **JOANNA OZDOBINSKA**

With notes by Newt Scamander

IT'S ALMOST TIME TO HEAD BACK TO THE WIZARDING WORLD, BUT TO BE HONEST, NO ONE REALLY EVER LEFT IT. WE'VE JUST SPENT THE FIVE YEARS SINCE THE FINAL DEATHLY HALLOWS FILM STANDING BY, WAITING FOR the cogs to start turning again, and for magic to fall out of somewhere. This time, instead of hopping aboard the Hogwarts Express, we're setting sail on a steamboat across the Atlantic Ocean, bound for New York City, 1926.

Magizoologist Newt Scamander may have just been a fictional author with an appropriate name a couple of years ago, but now he actually has a personality, a back story and a face – which happens to be attached to Academy Award-winner Eddie Redmayne (*The Theory Of Everything*). When we meet the Buster Keaton-esque Newt at the start of the film, he's a year into a worldwide research trip, having just visited Equatorial Guinea.

"I love Newt because he's complicated; he's not your average sort of hero," Redmayne tells us. "In fact, he's quite naughty and spiky, and he's much more content in his own company or the company of his creatures than he is with other human beings."

His mission to search for and rehabilitate magical creatures across the globe leads him to New York, where he decides to take up residence for a while. It's there that he bumps into Porpentina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston), an American witch who somehow gets swept up in a somewhat inconvenient adventure when Newt's 'specimens' escape his custody. When Newt and Porpentina meet, the latter has recently been demoted at work, causing her to wonder if she really is as hopeless as other people think she is.

"I don't really believe that other people can fix you," says Waterston, "but sometimes, someone comes along and gives you a little responsibility that you didn't have before, and if you thrive then it can kind of elicit a great change in the way you feel about yourself. And in the film there's so many subtle places where [Newt] says, 'Yeah, you can help me here, or do a little magic…'"

One of the main differences between *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* and the *Harry Potter* film series is the lack of source material. Sure, *Fantastic Beasts* started life in 2001 as a charity spin-off book, but what's 42 pages of textbook entries compared to almost 3,500 of *Potter*? To get around that fact, the new film brought in J. K. Rowling herself to pen the script, meaning that everything is 100 per cent canon to the *Potter* universe.

Even with *Pottermore*, *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* and various other time-consuming projects, Rowling still made it a rule to visit the *Fantastic Beasts* set whenever she could.

"What's amazing about what J. K. Rowling does is everything has such a logic that actually you don't even need to think about it, because she has done all that work for you," says Redmayne. "Her universe is so thorough. Having her on set, *she* is the resource, and if you ever have a problem you just go and ask her."

"She's wonderful," says actor Dan Fogler, who plays muggle and aspiring baker Jacob Kowalski. "Her energy is just infectious. It's so fresh for her, and just sitting down with her, sharing her ideas of what she might have in store for us, is just so fascinating, because she's thought of everything. ⇛



Newt and his new friends attempt to recapture the escaped beasts.

DISGUISE: Danger Rating ****

Must remember Norway is American

Dangerous BEASTS!



Eddie Redmayne is giving Newt a personality beyond the textbook.

"She was delighted [on set]. She was very happy every time I saw her," he continues. "You would be too if your dream was suddenly realised in such a mega fashion. She was just so passionate about relaying stuff about our characters and our characters' futures. And you realise just talking to her – my God, she has thought of every detail. And how long has she thought about all these things? They'll do a study of her brain, you know, and find similarities to Einstein – that she has extra lobes or something!"

For the *Fantastic Beasts* trilogy (or the first two, at least), Rowling is teaming up again – and probably not for the last time – with director David Yates, the man behind *Order Of The Phoenix*, *Half-Blood Prince* and both *Deathly Hallows* films. The pair's working relationship was a little different this time around, however, what with Rowling playing a bigger part in the production side of things.

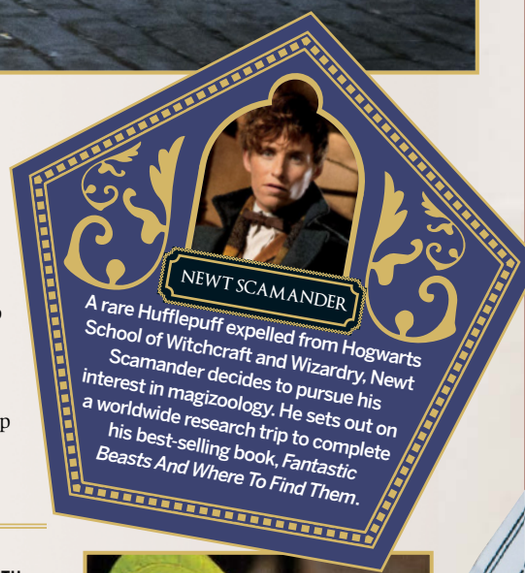
"When we were adapting the books, Jo was kind of removed from the process in a sense, because she was so busy writing the rest of the books," Yates tells us. "She had a lot going on, so we would have screenwriters Steve Kloves or Michael Goldenberg come in, and they would adapt. Jo would see the script, and she would have a note or two. But it was a bit like a visit from the queen; she would come in and give her approval, and we'd all be thankful that she liked it, and then off we would go and make a movie.

"In this case she's creating it continuously, so we were with her and working with her, shaping and refining," he adds. "It's a very different experience, and fascinating for that, and so we would give her notes, she would send them back, and we would sit in a room with her and develop it with her. That's been an enormous pleasure, and really fascinating, because she has an amazing imagination obviously, but she's also very pragmatic, and she's learning the sort of transition from writing novels to writing a screenplay. So she's sort of getting that muscle group developed, which she's done very, very quickly."



Harry Potter director David Yates is back in the wizarding world.

Good name for a band.



THE PRESSURE THAT CAME WITH HARRY POTTER AND PLEASING THE FANS OF THE BOOK WAS LIFTED A LITTLE ON FANTASTIC BEASTS owing to the fact that no one knows much of Newt's story already. Everything can be fresh, and whatever Yates and Rowling want it to be. "It's much more liberating, because everybody felt they had ownership of those books, and everybody had their favourite chapters, sequences and moments and characters," says Yates. "As you adapt those into a screenplay form, you're letting things go all the time that you struggle to let go, but you know that they're not going to quite fit in the movie, and that there's a lot of people getting angry and really pissed off that you've let certain things go. And in this case it's all new."

The impressive box-office results and fan reception are both testaments to how



After 15 years, Bowtruckles have finally made it to the screen.

BOWTRUCKLE: Danger Rating **

IN THE BAG

Everything you need to pack for the New York research trip of a lifetime



A GOOD SCARF
Conjuring a jar of flames to carry around isn't always possible, particularly in muggle-populated areas, so make sure you have a scarf tucked away in case temperatures drop.

A QUILL AND NOTEBOOK
Always keep a notebook and quill within reach to jot down discoveries and observations while on a research trip. Even better, get a pocket installed in your cloak to carry such items.

A STURDY CASE
A good traveller is an organised traveller, so manage your space wisely. Muggle-proof your luggage by performing a simple Undetectable Extension Charm or using an anti-muggle switch.

SOME TASTY TREATS
No long-haul journey is complete without a batch of tasty snacks to tuck into when things get dull. Chocolate Frogs and Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans are a must.

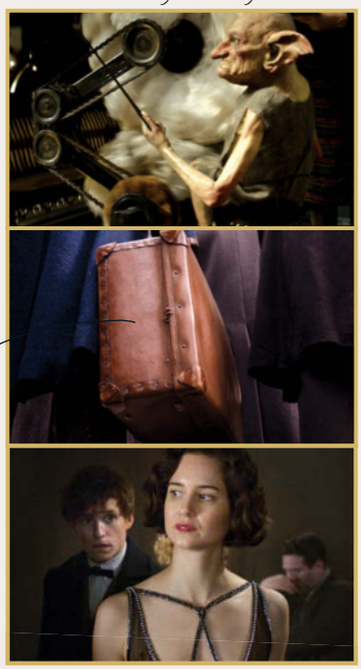
A MAP
You have got no chance of navigating New York without a map. Apparation and broomsticks might not always be an option, forcing you to go muggle and take the subway.

A MUGGLE PASSPORT
Muggles use these things called 'passports' in order to get into different countries. Keep one with you at all times. Make sure you are not wearing a hat in your picture.

A GUIDE TO NEW YORK
A new friend to show you the New York sites would be ideal, but you might just have to make do with a tested guidebook for now. Try to fit in some food and theatre.

A WAND
This may seem redundant, but you would be surprised how many witches and wizards forget to bring their wands and have to spend their trips living as muggles.

HOUSE ELF: Danger Rating *



Danger DO NOT TOUCH

well Rowling and Yates work together. They understand each other. Alison Sudol, who plays Porpentina's younger sister Queenie, thinks this could be because they both possess a certain kind of magic that is completely their own.

"[Yates] has his own magic," she says. "These enormous sets can be quite overwhelming for actors… But David has a way of drawing you into this story. Before we would start a new scene, he would describe what we were seeing, and he has such a love for [the beasts], so the way that he would describe them was so gentle that you also felt Newt's love.

"He gave us perspective both of what these characters would be feeling and how they could see them through Newt's eyes, and brought them to life. It's not always easy when you're looking at a stick to remember that – a stick with a dot on it, that's this extraordinary creature – but we all felt it, and it is some kind of magic."

WHETHER INTENTIONALLY OR NOT, FANTASTIC BEASTS SEEMS TO HAVE SCORED ITSELF NOT ONLY A CAST OF brilliant actors, but also a cast of genuine *Harry Potter* fanatics. "The spokes of the *Harry Potter* universe is something that a whole generation has been raised on; it's within us now," says Sudol. She grew up reading the books, and finally completed *The Deathly Hallows* while on tour with her band. "Even though I was in my 20s, I was sitting in my bunk at night, and everybody else was sort of hanging out and doing the band thing, and couldn't have been happier, and was so sad when it finished. All of us thought that was the end of this world.

"And then now," she goes on to explain, "We get this gift of having another story from [Rowling's] mind. But it's new, so it's not trying to recreate what we already loved, because you can't duplicate that. That was perfect in itself. And so this is the same sensibility, but it's America and it's in the Twenties, and it's new characters and it's a different storyline. It's kind of everything, as a fan, I would have hoped for, and then I'm about to live in it as well, which is just crazy."

Like most *Harry Potter* readers, Sudol has a very specific picture of what the wizarding world looks like in her mind. "Oftentimes,



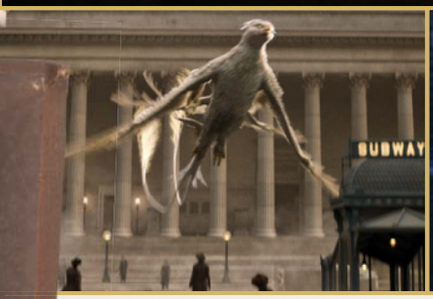
AROUND THE WORLD IN 14 CREATURES

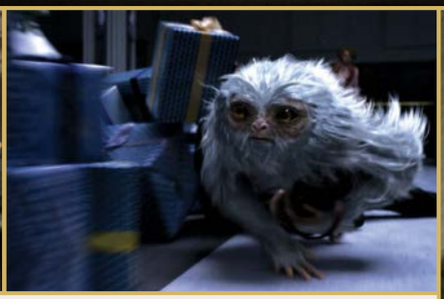




> "I WOULD BE A LIAR IF I SAID THAT THE SCORE KICKING IN DOESN'T MAKE ME EMOTIONAL"
> COLIN FARRELL

Colin Farrell is representing aurors of the US as MACUSA worker Percival Graves.







Redmayne and Waterston on set with David Yates.

books are adapted and you see it and you're just like, 'That's not what it looks like,'" she says. "And it's so frustrating when that happens and they did such a beautiful job with the *Harry Potter* films. They were so authentic, and actually somehow managed to capture what I had in my head. It seemed like it actually matched the picture somehow."

"I just did a film with a girl who was 11 when Harry was 11," says Waterston. "And what that whole world means to her because she really grew up with him, to get to have something, to give more to that generation who are now adults is [amazing]. It's a nice journey to give them as well. They may want to see some adults in this world now too."

Colin Farrell (*The Lobster*), who plays MACUSA (the American equivalent of the Ministry of Magic) auror Percival Graves, is of a slightly older generation, but he has still managed to develop a personal connection to the wizarding world over the years, mostly through his children.

"I'd always kind of had a bit of a desire to be part of that world," he admits, "or any world that's as beautifully drawn and is so inherently about escapism, but also pays due respect to human emotions and relationships between characters as the *Potter* films do. And so when the call came in and I was told that J. K. Rowling had written her first original screenplay, and asked would I get on the phone with David Yates? Myself and David had a conversation, and he's just so bright and so enthusiastic and so lovely and engaging. And that was it really. I read the script, and was delighted to be a part of it.

"I would be a liar if I said that being in a trailer when that score kicks in doesn't make me [get emotional]," continues Farrell. "I mean, I'm 40 and I shouldn't say such things! But a little bit…"

EVEN THOUGH MUCH OF FANTASTIC BEASTS AND THE WIZARDING WORLD, PARTICULARLY IN TWENTIES NEW YORK, IS ABOUT AS FAR REMOVED from our world as you can get, the cast and crew insist the story is still relevant to today's social and political climate.

"One of Jo's brilliant qualities is being able to weave into this context of a magical world those familiar things that are contemporary themes and done with the lightness of touch that you ▷▷

Relation of the Fire Crab?







TWENTIES HISTORICAL FIGURES WHO WERE DEFINITELY NOT MUGGLES

They were hiding in plain sight!

Actually a KNEAZLE!

SALVADOR DALI



There's no way the surrealist painter didn't have links to the wizarding world. We're just not having it.

AL CAPONE



How else do you think he spent seven years as a mob boss? Seven is the most magically powerful number, after all.

FRIDA KAHLO



The painter and revolutionary didn't reach the height of her powers until later, but she was learning.

TS ELIOT



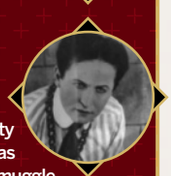
The essayist, publisher, playwright and social critic liked to cast Confundus Charms on all his work.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG



Satchmo's trumpet playing was practically magic anyway. If only he had duetted with Celestina Warbeck.

SURPRISE MUGGLE: HARRY HOUDINI



Despite what some of the wizarding community thinks, Harry Houdini was actually just a talented muggle.

Are you sure?

TS Eliot Image © Ellie Koczela

don't feel like you're being sort of sledge-hammered," says Redmayne. "But there are many aspects of this film, and in the characterisation of the people, that have a contemporary resonance."

Yates thinks the same, although he insists that *Fantastic Beasts* isn't a political film. "It's an entertaining, wonderful, warm story with fairly dark bits in it," he explains. But [Rowling is] worried about the world, in a way that the world gets polarised, in a way that people are afraid of things and afraid of others. There are elements of that implicit in our story, which make it very, very interesting, and very powerful and moving."

"People look to label people," adds producer – of all the *Potter* films – David Heyman. "They look to stigmatise certain sorts of people, to segregate and create divisions in society, and as David said, this is not a political film, but there's just something that simmers, just simmers beneath the surface which is a part of the story. It's also about outsiders and what we all feel about a group of people… in some ways it's about them finding – through the course of the story – their own new community, their friends."

"Being able to express yourself and be yourself and not be stigmatised for who and what you are – that's a constant theme, and it's present in the story," continues Yates. "And it's grown up, so it's New York, and it's period, so it's kind of like going to a really lovely restaurant that you love. You love the waiters because they're always fun to be around, you love the view through the window because it's got a beautiful tree that you adore, and it always makes you happy when you're in that place. But then they bring you a meal that you've never had before that's got flavours that are really surprising. So you're in a place that feels comfortable and feels like home, but then you get this amazing food that's different, and that's what it feels like; this weird a bit of nostalgia and familiarity, but very fresh in many other ways."

"I really hope people enjoy the film," says Farrell. "Some films are made to provoke, some films are made to highlight certain social ills, and other films are made to provide a really entertaining escapism. One of the great things about David Yates is that the escapism is there. It's in what J. K. creates, and what David does is he comes in and concerns himself with the performances and the human beings and how they're interacting. The *Potter* films, you know with everything that's going on in them, they're about the journey from boy or girl to man and woman. They're about friendships and all those things that


With a sequel already confirmed, we can't wait to see what's in store.



Newt Scamander's research trip takes him across the globe.

QUEENIE GOLDSTEIN

The younger sister of Porpentina, Queenie Goldstein works a desk job at the Magical Congress of the United States of America. She is an accomplished practitioner of the art of Legilimency, which she can carry out non-verbally and without detection.

have been written about for centuries, and been mulled over and confused us for centuries."

REDMAYNE BELIEVES THE REASON PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO CONNECT TO THE WIZARDING WORLD IS BECAUSE OF THE CONTRAST between that world and our own. "It's two worlds that are living side by side," muses Redmayne. "I think that's the escapism. We all live our own lives and where you have good days, bad days… The idea that there is a parallel world going on somewhere that you could shift into or sort of move within… It heightens reality in a way that is great for one's mind – escapism and imagination."

Before he landed the role of Newt Scamander, Redmayne was summoned to a Soho club to meet with David Yates and discuss the film. At the start of the meeting, Redmayne didn't yet know what the film actually was, but Yates started to describe Newt, magizoology, the wizarding world in Twenties New York and Newt's expanding travelling case. Coincidentally, Redmayne happened to already own a battered vintage suitcase, his 'work briefcase' that he takes everywhere with him, including to his meeting with Yates.

"I say, 'I'm so sorry I'm not one of those actors'," laughs Redmayne. "I'm not one of those that turn up dressed as Superman! It's my favourite case in the world, but I now have this really weird thing where I've always used it, but now if I use it people will think that I'm becoming mad or something. It's like I'm having this moral issue with myself; 'but no, Eddie, don't give that up just because of what other people think,' you know, but it looks like I'm being a dick anyway."

Like his co-stars, Redmayne had to take some time to get used to the idea that he is now a part of the wizarding world. "It's a weird thing," he says. "When you get to pick up a wand, it's like your inner nine-year old is having the best moment of his life. You're like, 'Oh my god, I get to use one of these! I've always wanted to use one of these!' Then you pick the thing up and you're like, 'Why does this feel so weird? What do I do with it?' I actually got complete stage fright. It took quite a while for us to get used to it."

Farrell had a similar experience with his wand. "It's great to do research, but it's hard to do research on wizards," he tells us. "You can only twirl your wand in your hotel room for three or four minutes before you feel completely ridiculous."

Obviously there's a lot more to magic than just waving your wand around – there's also the intent, the technique and the incantations to consider. On set, the cast could often be found trying to make up their own spells. "Dan [Fogler] was great at inventing spells," says Waterston, as she tries to come up with one to banish Donald Trump. "I wonder what it would be like? 'Moonup Trumperus' or something. You know, like to send him to the moon. There were wonderful ones about, 'Katherine Ha-Perincus' was to act better."

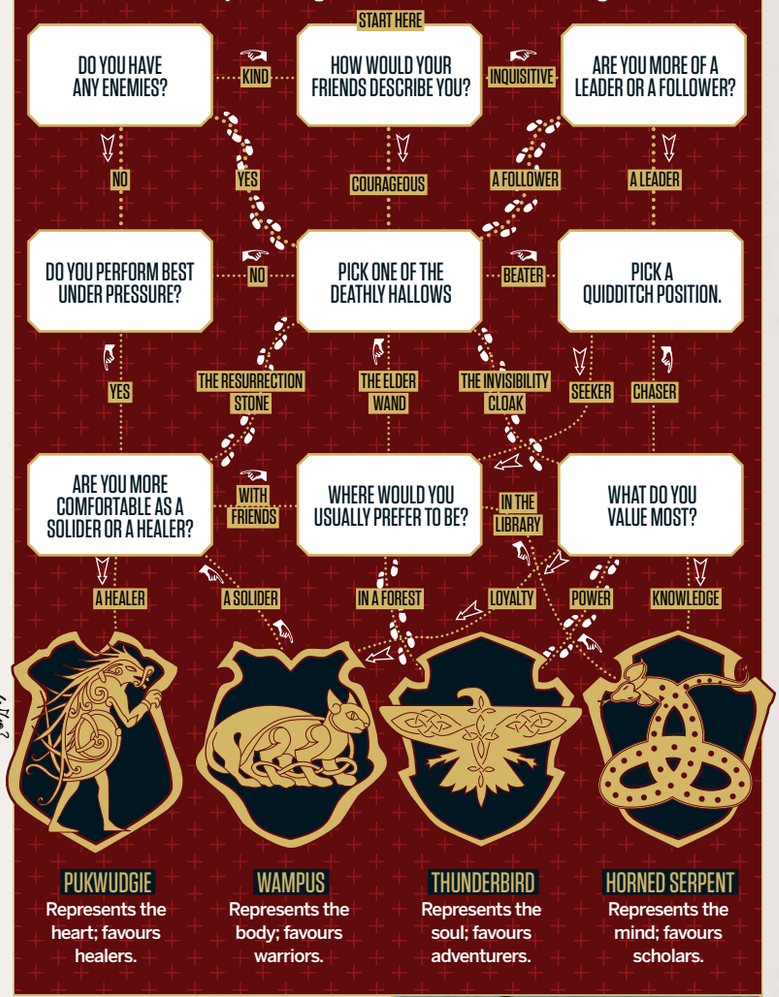
"And if we were feeling a bit lazy and I needed some better, you know, I needed a bit of energy, he'd be like, 'Leonardo Di-Caffeinate!' And you'd start acting well," adds Redmayne.

With *Pottermore* and the *Cursed Child*, character birthdays and celebrations, and rereads and rewatches, we never really left the wizarding world. But it still feels wonderful to have the magic back.

Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them is in cinemas from 18 November.

WHICH ILVERMORNY HOUSE ARE YOU IN?

Find out where you belong at the United States' wizarding school



PUKWUDGIE
Represents the heart; favours healers.

WAMPUS
Represents the body; favours warriors.

THUNDERBIRD
Represents the soul; favours adventurers.

HORNED SERPENT
Represents the mind; favours scholars.







NIFFLER: Danger Rating ***

HARRY POTTER AND THE MISSING PLOTLINES

IT'S BEEN YEARS, BUT WE'RE STILL KIND OF SAD THAT THESE MAGICAL HARRY POTTER BOOK MOMENTS WEREN'T IN THE FILMS...

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER**



DID YOU KNOW

Rik Mayall has said that he didn't tell his children that he had been cut out of *The Philosopher's Stone* before they watched it. He told them that instead of Peeves, he had played Hagrid, and required a lot of extra hair and make-up.

DID YOU KNOW

After Hogwarts, Hermione began her career at the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, where she continued her campaign.

Peeves the Poltergeist

Every *Harry Potter* fan on the planet has been harking on about this one for more than a decade, but it's still a tragedy. Peeves wasn't exactly necessary to the plot, but he's a still great character, and entertaining to boot. We can't decide if the fact that Rik Mayall was originally cast in the role and had filmed his scenes before being cut out of *The Philosopher's Stone* makes the whole situation better or worse. It's a classic case of 'it's better to have loved and lost...' Can you imagine how good Mayall as Peeves going head-to-head with David Bradley as Filch would have been?

SPEW

Hermione's greatest quality, above even logic and cleverness, is how much she cares about things. Schoolwork, her friends and fighting Voldemort obviously top the list of her priorities, but she's also extremely keen on equality and justice, particularly when it comes to house elves. Not only was the Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare (SPEW for short) an entertaining subplot; it also gave Hermione something productive to be getting on with besides revision and helping to move Harry's journey along. We like to think that Hermione continued liberating house elves into her adult years, whether they wanted to be or not.

© David Cousens



DID YOU KNOW

Rowling was asked if Charlie Weasley was gay. She confirmed that he was in fact straight, but he didn't really date as he was "more interested in dragons than women."

Charlie Weasley

Charlie is easily one of the coolest Weasleys, what with the whole dragons thing he has going on, and, although he doesn't feature in the books as often as his family members, it's still kind of ridiculous that he didn't make at least a quick appearance. The Egypt photo in *Prisoner Of Azkaban* hardly does him justice. We've missed out on so much, from friendship with Hagrid during the Triwizard Tournament to his best man duties at Bill's wedding. Maybe Charlie's neglect could fuel the fire for his own spin-off film series, where he just knocks about in the Romanian wild, looking for dragons to befriend. Get Warner Bros on the phone!

> "THE EGYPT PHOTO IN PRISONER OF AZKABAN HARDLY DOES CHARLIE JUSTICE"

Ludo Bagman

Former Wimbourne Wasps beater Ludo Bagman is another example of a character that was easily cut out of the films with little to no damage to the overarching plot, but we're still gutted that he never made it to the screen. A wacky gambling subplot is exactly what the *Goblet Of Fire* film needed to lighten the mood a little bit. Just think of all the filmgoers who don't even know who he is! His Quidditch banter and back-and-forths with Barty Crouch Senior kept us going when everything else in the wizarding world was rapidly hitting the fan.



DID YOU KNOW

Ludo Bagman and Victor Krum aren't the only professional Quidditch players Harry knows; Ginny joined the Holyhead Harpies, an all-female team after school, and later became the senior Quidditch reporter for the *Daily Prophet*.

DID YOU KNOW

Miranda Richardson played Hermione in a Comic Relief sketch called *Harry Potter And The Secret Chamberpot Of Azerbaijan* in 2003 before being cast as Rita Skeeter.

Rita Skeeter as an Animagus

We guess we can let Peeves, SPEW, Bagman and Charlie Weasley slide purely because the films still managed to make sense without them, but we would categorise the fact that wizarding reporter Rita Skeeter collects her information by illegally turning into a beetle as being pretty damn important. We like to operate under a no-loose-ends system, and in this instance the film universe doesn't meet the requirements. The same can be said for the film's portrayal of Sirius Black's two-way mirror, the Gaunt family's background and relevance, the way that Horcruxes *actually* work, who the Marauders were, Dumbledore's youth – the list goes on...

FANTASTIC FACTS & WHERE TO READ THEM

FILM STATS

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE
$125 MILLION
$974,755,550

THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS
$100 MILLION
$878.979,634

THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN
$130 MILLION
$797,688,549

THE GOBLET OF FIRE
$150 MILLION
$896,911,078

THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
$150 MILLION
$939,885,929

THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE
$250 MILLION
$934,416,487

THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PART ONE
$250 MILLION*
$960,283,305

THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PART TWO
$250 MILLION*
$1,341,511,219

$1,000,000,155 TOTAL COST TO MAKE THE FILMS

TOTAL INCOME OF THE FILMS **$7,728,431,751**

*SHARED BUDGET

1990 to 2007

J. K. Rowling worked on the Harry Potter series for 17 years

MUGGLEBORN REGISTRATION COMMISSION

This is a bit of an obvious one: Muggleborn registration is reminiscent of the Holocaust, and the tension between Pure-bloods and Muggle-borns represent racism. But that's a little heavy for what is essentially a children's series.

METAPHORS

WEREWOLVES

Rowling has said that Lupin's lycanthropy is a metaphor for illnesses that carry stigma like HIV. Like Muggles, magical folk are prone to prejudice, prompting Lupin to quit his teaching job when Snape outed him as a werewolf.

DEMENTORS

The dementors are supposed to represent depression, and were based on Rowling's own battle with depression after the death of her mother in 1990. She told Oprah that dementors create a "hollowed-out... cold absence of feeling."

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

One of the series' most famous magical MacGuffins represents the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden, ie: a small, red something that humanity should stop trying to get their hands on. Immortality and great wealth leads to trouble.

772 NAMED AND UNNAMED CHARACTERS IN THE HARRY POTTER CANON

To make the 'TOM MARVOLO RIDDLE/I AM LORD VOLDEMORT' anagram work in other languages, J. K. ROWLING had to change THE DARK LORD'S name...

FRENCH
Tom Elvis Jedusor:
Je suis Voldemort

GERMAN
Tom Vorlost Riddle:
Ist Lord Voldemort

SPANISH:
Tom Sorvolo Ryddle:
Soy Lord Voldemort

BEST SELLING HARRY POTTER BOOKS IN THE UK

1. The Deathly Hallows
2. The Philosopher's Stone
3. The Order of the Phoenix
6. The Prisoner of Azkaban
7. The Half-Blood Prince

NAMES AND MEANINGS

HARRY
comes from the Old High German word 'Heri', meaning 'army'

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE
'albus' means 'white'; 'dumbledore' is an archaic word for 'bumblebee'

RUBEUS HAGRID
'rubeus' comes from the Latin 'Rubeo', meaning 'red' or 'ruddy'; 'hagrid' is derived from 'hagridden', meaning 'worried'

MALFOY
'mal' is derived from the Old French word 'mal', meaning 'bad' or 'evil'; 'foy' comes from 'foi', meaning 'faith' or 'trust'

REMUS LUPIN
'remus' comes from the Roman wolf myth 'Romulus and Remus'; 'lupin' is derived from the Latin 'lupinus', meaning 'of a wolf'

VOLDEMORT
comes from the French 'vol de mort', meaning 'flight of death'

DOLORES UMBRIDGE
'dolor' is Latin for 'pain', 'sadness' or 'resentment'; 'umbridge' is a homonym for the English word 'umbrage' meaning 'to take offense'

BELLATRIX LESTRANGE
'bellatrix' is Latin for 'warrior'; 'le strange' is French for 'the strange'

LUDO BAGMAN
'ludo' is derived from the Latin 'ludus' meaning 'game'; 'bagman' is a British word for a travelling salesman

UNPOPULAR OPINION POLLS

1 WHO DO YOU HATE THE MOST?
Dolores Umbridge 73%
Bellatrix Lestrange 11%
Lord Voldemort 8%
Peter 'Wormtail' Pettigrew 8%

2 SNAPE?
Love him 86%
Hate him 14%

3 WHO IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE OF THE GOLDEN TRIO?
Ron 43%
Harry 39%
Hermione 18%



4 WHICH IS THE WORST ENDGAME BOOK PAIRING?
Harry and Ginny 36%
Neville and Hannah Abbott 35%
Ron and Hermione 29%

5 WHICH HOGWARTS HOUSE WOULD YOU WANT TO BE SORTED INTO THE LEAST?
Hufflepuff 44%
Slytherin 29%
Gryffindor 19%
Ravenclaw 8%

6 WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS ON ALBUS DUMBLEDORE?
57% He's okay, I guess
34% He's the best
9% He's the worst

7 WHICH CHARACTER DEATH WAS THE MOST TRAGIC AND UNNECESSARY?
Dobby 38%
Fred Weasley 24%
Remus Lupin 21%
Sirius Black 17%

HARRY is mentioned 18956 times

RON is mentioned 6464 times

HERMIONE is mentioned 5486 times

DUMBLEDORE'S BOGGART IS THE CORPSE OF HIS LATE SISTER, ARIANA

> "We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better"
> J.K. Rowling

THROWAWAY FORESHADOWING

While Harry, Hermione and the Weasleys clean out cabinets at 12 Grimmauld Place in *The Order Of The Phoenix*, they find a "heavy locket that none of them could open." In *The Deathly Hallows*, the locket is revealed to be a Horcrux.

When Harry first meets the centaur Firenze in the Forbidden Forest, Firenze tells him that "Mars is bright tonight". Mars is the Roman god of war, suggesting that the centaurs accurately predicted the start of the Second Wizarding War.

At Christmas dinner in *The Prisoner Of Azkaban*, Trelawney frets that the first to rise at a table of 13 will be the first to die. Pettigrew, disguised as Scabbers, made 13. Dumbledore rose to greet her and became the first of them to die.

The 'first to rise of 13 is the first to die' prophecy came true twice more in the series: Sirius was the first to rise and die after dining at Grimmauld Place, while Lupin was the first to rise and die after Mad-Eye Moody's wake at the Burrow.

Petunia mentions dementors in *The Order Of The Phoenix*, saying she "heard that awful boy telling [Lily] about them," and Harry asks why she doesn't say his father's name. Petunia seems confused; it turns out she was referring to Snape.

Remus Lupin posthumously received the Order of Merlin, First Class. He was the first werewolf to ever receive this honour.

One of the film quibbles fans of the books usually have is that DANIEL RADCLIFFE'S EYES AREN'T GREEN like Harry's. RADCLIFFE tried wearing GREEN contact lenses early on, but he ended up having an ADVERSE REACTION to them

THE ONLY TIMES THE WEASLEY TWINS WERE APART WERE WHEN GEORGE LOST HIS EAR AND WHEN FRED DIED

The Goblet of Fire

4 SEVERUS SNAPE
– 'severus' is Latin for 'strict' or 'severe'; 'snape' is derived from the Old Norse word 'sneypa', meaning 'to outrage, dishonour, disgrace'

The Chamber of Secrets

5



SCHOOL REUNION

THE DOCTOR WHO UNIVERSE IS HEADING BACK TO COAL HILL FOR CLASS, ITS NEW SPIN-OFF AIMED AT A TEEN AUDIENCE, ALBEIT WITH A HORROR-TINGED TWIST. WE VISITED THE CARDIFF SET TO SPEAK WITH THE CREATORS AND CAST...

WORDS **STEVE O'BRIEN**



Peter Capaldi cameos in the first episode as the Doctor.

WE HAVE JUST BEEN TOLD TO STICK OUR FINGERS IN OUR EARS. "THREE, TWO, ONE – ACTION!" CRIES THE FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AS AN EAR-PIERCING EXPLOSION ROARS THROUGH THE STUDIOS OF ROATH Lock. "Cut!" she yells as a member of the crew scurries onto the set with a fire extinguisher. "Everybody okay?" she asks. We gesture a thumbs up.

Bangs like that are a common thing at Roath Lock. The studio, just off Cardiff Bay, has been the home of *Doctor Who* since 2011, and is now the main base for *Class*, a new eight-part series that will be *Doctor Who*'s third small-screen spin-off since its 2005 reboot.

Since *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Torchwood* signed off in 2011, *Doctor Who* has been walking it alone on the small screen – not that there was never talk about doing another one: "We would never do a spin-off just because there was a want for it," executive producer Brian Minchin tells us. "It had to be the right idea."

That 'right idea' has its roots in the very first episode of *Doctor Who*, broadcast on 23 November 1963. The Shoreditch-based Coal Hill School made its first appearance in that monochrome pilot, before reappearing 25 years later in 'Remembrance Of The Daleks'. Fast-forward another quarter century, and there it was again, a dramatic mainstay of Peter Capaldi's debut series, with Clara Oswald its new English teacher.

Around that time, *Doctor Who*'s head honcho Steven Moffat was attempting to woo acclaimed author Patrick Ness into the *Doctor Who* writing pool. It seemed a snug fit, but despite being a fan of the show ("I love its bite," he smiles), Ness wasn't keen on playing with characters he hadn't created.

"It was fantastic to be asked, but I thought, 'I'm kind of at the moment right now where I'd rather do something of my own,'" Ness reflects. That was when Moffat told him, "Well, we have this other thought…"

The idea of a Coal Hill spin-off had been simmering in Moffat's head since he reintroduced the school in the 50th anniversary special, 'The Day Of The Doctor'. It was always intended that this show would be fashioned for teenagers, an elusive demographic that *Doctor Who* had never explicitly chased – *The Sarah Jane Adventures* was targeted at the CBBC crowd, while *Torchwood* was a post-watershed bonkathon with a fierce love of the f-bomb.


Patrick Ness's involvement with *Class* is a long time coming.



SOPHIE HOPKINS (APRIL)

"April in every bit of her being wants to do good and help others. She's the sole carer for her mum, so she's really strong and she's wise before her years, I think. She's a bit of a mother hen. She's always trying to keep everyone together, maybe even before herself."

> "WHEN I WAS 16 I WOULD HAVE KILLED FOR A SHOW WITH A GAY LEAD... IT'S NOT REALLY A BIG DEAL NOW"
> PATRICK NESS

Among the stars are *Coronation Street*'s Katherine Kelly and newcomer Sophie Hopkins.

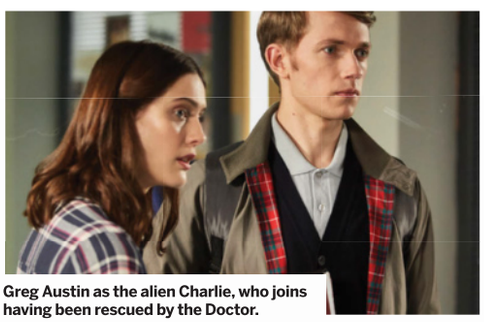
"I thought, 'Ooh, I know how I'd do that," Ness says. "I knew how I'd start that, and I knew who might be the centre of that and what might stick to that."

Set in the sixth form of the newly renamed Coal Hill Academy, *Class* focuses on a group of teens – Sophie, Vivian, Fady, Matteusz and Charlie, an alien from the planet Rhodia who escapes to Earth after fleeing from the warring Shadow Kin. 'Aspirational' is the watchword for this freshly styled Coal Hill. "This is a place you'll want to go, and these students are people you want to have as your friends," says Ness.

Walking around the set, it's easy to see what Ness means. The new Coal Hill appears more Sunnydale than Grange Hill. "We wanted to update Coal Hill to make it more modern, more relevant," director Wayne Yip tells us. "It's a little bit American High School in feel."

Although *Class* is definitely its own beast, there are plenty of nods to its parent show dotted around the set. A Roll of Honour plaque ("Their name liveth forever") includes the names 'S Foreman', 'D Pink' and 'C Oswald', while the school boasts a building named after Barbara Wright, the history teacher played by Jacqueline Hill during the William Hartnell era. Look even more closely, and there's a flyer for Ness's 2011 novel *A Monster Calls* pinned to one of the noticeboards.

While Russell T Davies kept a fierce overseeing eye over *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Torchwood*, Moffat has, it appears, given Ness a very long leash with *Class*. This is very much a Patrick Ness production, with the 44-year-old American-born, British-based author the sole writer of the eight-episode run. "Steven just been really generous and given me room to play and find the show, while offering really, really smart advice," Ness says.



Greg Austin as the alien Charlie, who joins having been rescued by the Doctor.

WHEN CLASS WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED, MOFFAT DESCRIBED IT AS "DARK AND SEXY AND RIGHT NOW", WHICH COULD HAVE EASILY BEEN TORCHWOOD'S TAGLINE BACK IN THE MID-NOUGHTIES. BUT everyone here is keen to distance *Class* from its spin-off sibling. Both may have been birthed on BBC Three, but *Class* is avoiding *Torchwood*'s showy bad-boy swagger.

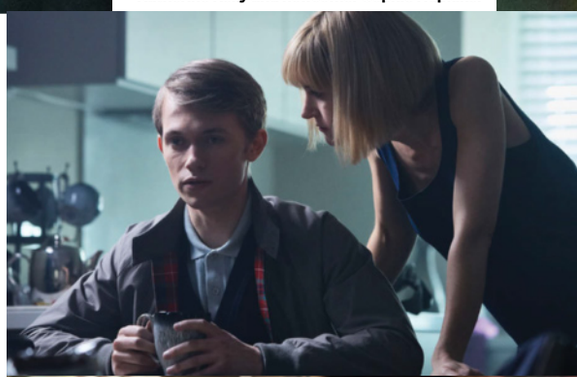
"*Torchwood* in the first series went quite far," admits Minchin, "and we haven't done anything like 'Countrycide' or anything like that, because I think you can sometimes push people away."

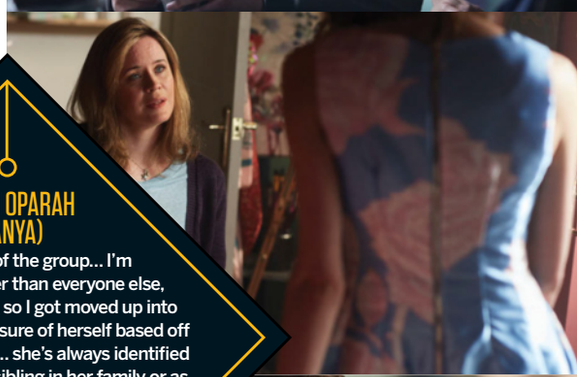
"Otherwise it does look like, 'Ooh look at us, how bad we're being,'" adds Ness. "And you don't want that to happen. It has to be story-driven. It has to come from story."

There's definitely a hot modernity to *Class*. It boasts a racially diverse cast, and its lead character, Charlie, is in a gay relationship. Perhaps more importantly, it's not even much of an issue.

"None of the character choices were political," stresses Ness, "When I was 16, I would have killed for a show with a gay lead who has a boyfriend. It's not a big deal in the show because it's not really a big deal when you're 16 now."

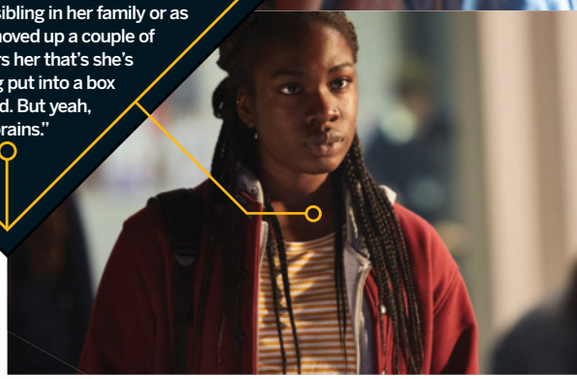
"I don't think it's as much of an issue for the Rhodians as it is in today's society, being gay or homosexual," says Greg Austin (*Mr Selfridge*), who plays Charlie. "So for my character, he comes to Earth, and is like, 'I like Matteusz,





VIVIEN OPARAH (TANYA)

"I'm the baby of the group... I'm three years younger than everyone else, but I'm super-smart, so I got moved up into sixth form. She's very sure of herself based off how much she knows... she's always identified as either the younger sibling in her family or as the girl who got moved up a couple of years... it angers her that's she's always being put into a box categorised. But yeah, the brains."





FADY ELSAYED (RAM)
"My character's a cool, loving, caring young man who's very driven, very passionate and always wants to be the best at everything."

I'm going to go out with him!' That's literally all it comes down to with Charlie."

We meet him in the opening moments of the first episode, when he is saved from the Shadow Kin and brought to Earth by, oh yes, the Doctor. Peter Capaldi is in the first episode of *Class*, but as to whether he'll resurface later, everybody's tight-lipped on. From the trailer we're shown, it looks like it's not just a fleeting cameo.

"I wrote a story for the *Doctor Who* 50th anniversary [eBook *Tip Of The Tongue*], and I really wanted the story to be about seeing the Doctor as an alien again," says Ness. "If you had no familiarity with him and he shows up, what the hell do you think of him? And so this is a little bit the same, it's a little bit seeing him again as an alien. And then he leaves… what does he leave behind?"

UNLIKE ITS SPIN-OFF SIBLINGS, CLASS WON'T BE PREMIERING ON TV. SINCE APRIL, BBC THREE HAS BEEN AN ONLINE-ONLY CHANNEL, MEANING THAT CLASS WILL BE THE FIRST SERIES FROM THE DOCTOR WHO UNIVERSE to debut on the Internet. But less tech-savvy viewers will get their chance to see it too, as it's planned to air at a later date on BBC One (though at the time of writing, the specifics have yet to be worked out). Don't go thinking that *Class*'s online birth suggests a drop in status though. For Ness, it's integral to the show's identity.

"The word I always used in the pitching over and over again, in meetings with every BBC executive, was 'contraband'. It needs to feel a little contraband; a little, 'Oh, this is the show that actually takes me seriously, that actually says the things that most fiction for teens is not allowed to say', and BBC Three really helps that, because that's how teenagers watch TV, and that's how they find TV, and that's how they talk about TV – online – so it's kind of perfect, because you can sneak-watch it."



Vivian Oparah as Tanya, the self-described "brains" of the group.

To today's teens, *Doctor Who* is part of the TV establishment, having been in their lives since they can remember. *Class* is banking on a more rebellious, punky allure, and although it shares connective tissue with *Who* and takes place in a corner of a much wider universe, it's still very much its own show with its own voice.

"This show isn't try to be mini *Doctor Who*," Minchin tells us. "You asked earlier why we haven't done a spin-off for so long on *Doctor Who*, and it's because we had to wait for an idea that had its own a voice, that had its own reason for being. That's what Patrick's done with *Class*, and that's what's really exciting for us here."

There's a sign on the main Coal Hill set here spelling out 'REACH'. It stands for Responsibility, Excellence, Aspiration, Community, Hard Work, and you feel it's there not just for the fictional pupils of Coal Hill Academy, but also for the crew of *Class*.

"We're so excited about this show," says Minchin. "It's so special what Patrick and everyone has put together… I've always wanted to make a show like this. I think it's the best combination of brilliant sci-fi stories and emotional stories I've worked on for a long, long time."

Class will be available on BBC Three later in October.

COAL HILL LEAVERS' YEARBOOK

The best of the Doctor Who spin-offs

MOST LIKELY TO BE LOVED BY EVERYONE



THE SARAH JANE ADVENTURES
"Life on Earth can be an adventure… you just need to know where to look."

MOST LIKELY TO GET INTO A SPOT OF BOTHER



COUNTER-MEASURES
"We all know what happened at Coal Hill…"

MOST LIKELY TO RUN THE COUNTRY



THE CHURCHILL YEARS
"If Hitler invaded Hell I would give a favourable reference to the Devil."

MOST LIKELY TO BE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND



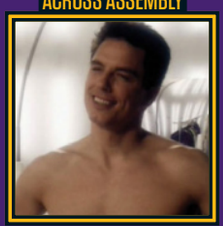
K-9 AND COMPANY
"She's like a butterfly, never in one place long enough to lick a stamp."

MOST LIKELY TO MAKE A SUDDEN REAPPEARANCE



JAGO AND LITEFOOT
"The Queen gets wind just like everyone else, George."

MOST LIKELY TO STREAK ACROSS ASSEMBLY

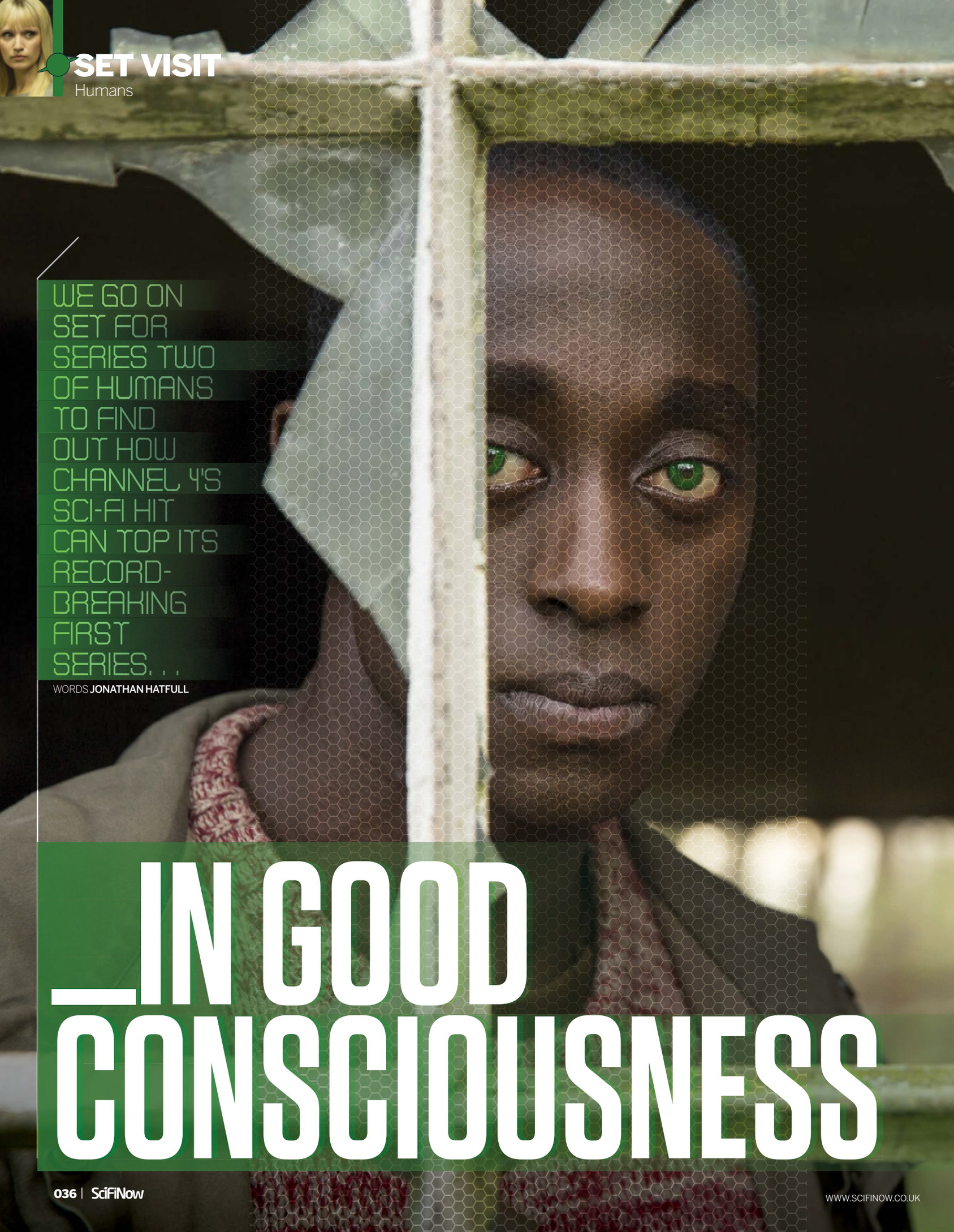


TORCHWOOD
"Excuse me, have you seen a blowfish driving a sports car?"



Since it's set in the *Doctor Who* universe, there'll inevitably be plenty of extra-terrestrial antics.

GREG AUSTIN (CHARLIE)
"I play Charlie, who's a Rhodian, an alien from the planet Rhodia. He's the prince of Rhodia who's one of the final two survivors along with Miss Quill. The Doctor saves us and brings us to Earth. So yeah, I've just come to Earth and I'm trying to fit in, really."



WE GO ON SET FOR SERIES TWO OF HUMANS TO FIND OUT HOW CHANNEL 4'S SCI-FI HIT CAN TOP ITS RECORD-BREAKING FIRST SERIES. . .

WORDS **JONATHAN HATFULL**

_IN GOOD CONSCIOUSNESS



AS WE'RE USHERED INTO THE HAWKINS FAMILY LIVING ROOM AND TOLD TO TAKE A SEAT ON THE SOFA, THERE'S AN UNMISTAKEABLE FEELING OF FAMILIARITY, EVEN IF THINGS AREN'T QUITE THE SAME. THIS IS A NEW house, and a fresh start for the family for the second series of Channel 4's AI sci-fi drama *Humans*. As series co-creator Sam Vincent tells us, it's all about keeping the same spirit while moving forward.

"The biggest challenge is you can't repeat yourself," he says. "You wonder about what the things were in Series One that were key to the tremendous appeal it [had], and you simply can't repeat them all, because you have no choice but to move forward. You could bend over backwards and try to tell the same story again, but it would be fake and an error. You have to move on to slightly uncharted territory: change things, move forward. There is that risk that you may be moving on from some of the things that people enjoyed, but that's also the excitement, because you get to make new ones."

Humans hit upon something in the zeitgeist. The sci-fi drama, which showed us a near future in which life-like androids known as synths are omnipresent and essentially used as household appliances, touched a nerve with the British public. It wasn't just genre fans tuning in; this was something that everyone seemed to latch on to, making for a tremendous success for Channel 4. A second series was inevitable.

"It's always hard to tell," co-creator Jonathan Brackley tells us. "Especially with something like this, which I think is unlike most things on telly, and it's sci-fi, which historically doesn't play quite as well on British TV, so it was very pleasing to see that it chimed with a broad range of our audience."

"I knew it was going to do well," Lucy Carless (who plays tech-savvy teen Mattie Hawkins) tells us when we catch up with the cast in one of their new house's bedrooms. "But to see it be that successful, and you're being told it's the most successful thing on Channel 4 in 20 years… it just blew my mind a little bit."

"Nobody saw the scale of it coming," agrees Emily Berrington, who plays ⇨

the initially icy synth Niska. "When I went into my local little corner shop and somebody said, 'Oh, I loved you in *Humans*!' I was like, 'Okay, it's made it to the corner shop!' It's worldwide!"

THE SHOW'S WORLDWIDE SUCCESS (IT'S CO-PRODUCED BY AMC, WHO BROADCAST IT IN THE US) WILL BE MIRRORED BY THE SCOPE OF THE SECOND series. There are new characters across the Atlantic in the form of Carrie-Anne Moss's Dr Athena Morrow (described as "an eminent AI scientist working on a slightly different AI angle"), and Marshall Allman's Milo Khoury ("A young Silicon Valley billionaire who is also very, very interested in this technology, who hires her to work on a secret project"). While the first series was very much focused on the people living with this technology, Series Two will also explore the journeys of the men and women behind it.

"We learned about AI researching the first series," explains Vincent. "We wanted to come at it from different angles. One of the things that bothered us was that if Elster had invented these machines some years ago, one thing that would be happening would be his peers and rivals and acolytes attempting to build on his work and discover what else could be done with the synths."

The question of what is happening with the synth children of David Elster, not to mention his actual son Leo (Colin Morgan), is one of the closely guarded secrets on the Mill Hill set. The first series' finale left many dangling plot lines, including the question of what Niska was going to do with that hard drive containing the programme to bring consciousness to all synths.

> "I WENT INTO MY LOCAL LITTLE CORNER SHOP AND SOMEBODY SAID 'OH, I LOVED YOU IN HUMANS!' I WAS LIKE, 'OKAY, IT'S MADE IT TO THE CORNER SHOP!'"
> EMILY BERRINGTON



Series Two will see Anita (Gemma Chan) take on a new role away from the Hawkins family.

Berrington is cagey with details, but she's able to give us some pieces of information of where her character has been in the six months since we last saw her on board a train at the end of Series One. "We find Niska in Berlin," she reveals, "Where she's gone to work out what to do with this consciousness code. She falls for somebody there, and that has an impact on how she looks at the world and whether to take a chance on uploading the code or not."



Niska (Emily Berrington) returns from her travels with a new agenda.

_BRITISH GENRE TV DIAGNOSTICS
Running scans on the UK's sci-fi shows

DOCTOR WHO
HEALTH: 90%
SERIES: Ten
With changes incoming – a new companion stepping in and a new showrunner – *Doctor Who* remains essential viewing, and we have every faith that the changes will be seamless.

HUMANS
HEALTH: 100%
SERIES: Two
We were thrilled with the performance of the first series, and are excited about what it will show us on its second run. Some concerns about second album syndrome, but very minor.

RED DWARF
HEALTH: 80%
SERIES: XI
It's been a bumpy road for *Red Dwarf* following the disappointing 'Back To Earth' three-part revival, but Series X made us confident that the boys from the Dwarf were back to what they do best.

BLACK MIRROR
HEALTH: 100%
SERIES: Three
After running the show through a Netflix reboot programme, *Black Mirror* looks to be stronger than ever. More episodes, big-name directors and a great cast – this is in very good shape indeed.

CRAZYHEAD
HEALTH: 70%
SERIES: One
Yet to air, so a full diagnostic cannot be completed, but we've got high hopes for the new show from *Misfits*' Howard Overman. A buddy exorcism comedy? What could possibly go wrong?

TRIPPED
HEALTH: 40%
SERIES: One
The reaction to the first series was mixed, to be brutally honest, despite the use of our favourite Inbetweener. There's been no word on more episodes, which is not encouraging.

THE ALIENS
HEALTH: 0%
SERIES: One
Even with a strong cast and a relevant premise, E4's sci-fi didn't exactly set the nation on fire, and it was recently, and unsurprisingly, announced that the show has not been brought back for a second series.

IN THE FLESH
HEALTH: 10%
SERIES: Two
We realise that this has been cancelled, but we refuse to lose hope that Dominic Mitchell's zombie drama will be back in some form at some point in the future. It's too good not to.





Nashville's Sam Palladio joins the cast as a young cafe owner.

_HELLO, ODI

Will Tudor on Humans' scene-stealing broken synth



Series One of *Humans* wasn't short on scene-stealing performances, but we were routinely heartbroken by Will Tudor's sensitive turn as George's (William Hurt) outdated synth Odi, offering apricot jam and memories of happier times. The first series finale seemed to suggest that we wouldn't see the character again, but he's back.

While he can't tell us much about the circumstances of Odi's return, Tudor teases that George's absence will be felt. "What's great about this series, and what it very subtly goes into, is this idea of how you treat a being that looks human but isn't, and at what stage do they become just a machine? And at what stage do people start to treat them almost like humans?"

When it came to getting back into the synth mindset and physicality, Tudor tells us that it was not a difficult process at all. "I'll tell you why: because I've missed it so much that I've gone back into it on various occasions!" he laughs. "What's great about the work that we do with Dan O'Neill, our movement director, is that it's very powerful and so unique, and I think that makes it very easy to keep the ideas in your head. The way synths approach the world is so different that it really stays in your memory and can't be erased. I'll be a synth until I die!"

While he can't tell us much about Odi's storyline, he does say that he's hoping for one of his trademarks to make a comeback. "Maybe he'll move on to different types of jam; different condiments!" he laughs. "What I like about the character is that he latches onto things. If he were to broaden his horizons too much it would be sensory overload, and so he comes back to the same things again and again. I hope we see lots of apricot jam!"

WE'RE USHERED INTO THE HOUSE'S FRONT ROOM TO WATCH A BANK OF MONITORS AS FILMING RESUMES. NISKA IS BACK IN THE LIVES OF THE Hawkins family – speaking of, we should note that some of the cast from the first series will not be returning. "You cannot have a cast of 30," explains Vincent. "In a very practical way you need to make space if you want to add new characters. The one or two omissions that there may be to the cast, they are simply because that character's storyline had ended in a way that offered us the opportunity to easily not have them return."

He's quick to assure us that the family's return was never in doubt. "There was no question of ever not finding a way to bring the Hawkins back, because they ground the story, they humanise the story; they're the way into the story," he enthuses. "They're wonderful characters and actors, but that was one of the challenges: to bring them back in a way that was organic and real, and tied them back into the synth characters."

While other characters struggle with the bigger questions of consciousness and AI, Katherine Parkinson (who plays Laura, the mother of the family) tells us that Series Two sees the Hawkins family going through some much more grounded issues after we've addressed the slight weirdness of interviewing her and Tom Goodman-Hill (Joe Hawkins) in their dressing gowns. "When you're in costume in pyjamas it tends to make you a bit sleepy – it's a strange thing!" she laughs. "They've moved house, Joe gets made redundant, but in other ways Laura's in a slightly better place, because I think she got some resolution last series, and they're going to couples therapy."

"Their counsellor is a synth!" Goodman-Hill tells us. "Which they initially hate the idea of, and then find out that she's rather good at her job!" We saw most synths in more functional roles in the first series, but Series Two shows us that they are becoming more integrated into society. "You start to see new synths who have a completely different mindset," explains Goodman-Hill. "And you see them working in different environments and starting to impinge on areas of human labour and work that they hadn't before. They are now beginning to be capable of taking over other roles in society that we haven't seen before."

That brings us to one of *Humans*' most striking qualities: the way it manages to address issues like xenophobia and intolerance without climbing on a soapbox. "We're never heavy-handed; we never hit anything too hard, because then you feel it becomes preachy or detracts from the story," Vincent tells us.

"Those themes speak for themselves, and people do a lot of that work for you, so you never really have to hit it that hard," he continues. "We tried to think about how the world would have moved on. Things are getting more complex. For example, the We Are People group that you see in Series One, they've evolved into a more sophisticated, bland political party, but with the same ethos – they now have local councillors. Conversations about groups of people who are seen by others as less deserving or unwelcome or inferior are so dominant in our culture that you don't have to do very much for these parallels to ring true."

Humans: Series Two will air on Channel 4 later in the year.



Katherine Parkinson admits that acting in her dressing gown makes her sleepy.



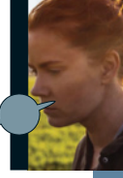
The Hawkins family remain the human anchor to the show.



FIRST CONTACT

WORDS **JONATHAN HATFULL** INTERVIEWS **ADAM TANSWELL**

WE TALK TO AMY ADAMS ABOUT BRINGING BRAINS AND HEART TO BIG-BUDGET SCI-FI WITH DENIS VILLENEUVE'S ARRIVAL



THE QUESTION OF HOW WE WOULD GREET AN ALIEN RACE IS THE BASIS OF SO MUCH GREAT SCI-FI. THERE'S NO DENYING THAT STEVEN SPIELBERG'S CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND SET THE TEMPLATE, BUT THERE'S a reason why we see filmmakers coming back to explore that hypothetical moment of first contact over and over again. It's a prospect that is both exciting and terrifying. What will they look like? Will they come in peace, or will they come to wipe us out? And perhaps most importantly of all, how will we greet them? Will this moment, when it comes, see us at our best, or our worst?

These questions form the basis of Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*, which has been wowing festival audiences since it premiered at Venice on 1 September. Based on the short story 'Story Of Your Life' by Ted Chiang, it begins with the arrival of 12 gigantic alien spacecraft around the world. As the respective nations struggle to decide how react, Colonel Webber (Forest Whitaker) recruits linguistic professor Dr Louise Banks (Amy Adams) to attempt to communicate with these visitors.

"It was really one of the best scripts I ever read, and it had such an amazing heart and soul to it, and on top of that, it had these sci-fi elements, which were also interesting and intriguing," Adams tells us. "It definitely falls in the category of sci-fi, but all the greatest sci-fi films that I have enjoyed offer a lot of complex ideas. It's not solved with simplicity, and it begs a lot of conversation from the audience and a lot of thinking. But at the end of the day, it left me with such a deep connection to Louise that it was hard for me to imagine letting it go and not sort of getting to see it through."

The connection that Adams has to her character is one that audiences can expect to share. Although *Arrival* isn't short on spectacle, with its enormous spaceships towering above Earth – not to mention alien creatures – in the very best genre tradition it's about humanity first and foremost.





Adams speaks highly of her experiences working with Denis Villeneuve (above).

"Absolutely," she enthuses. "Well, that was sort of the concept I grew up with – with *ET* and *Starman*, which I loved – that they were here to learn from us or gather something from our planet that didn't have to do with destroying us. And that is sort of my hope of what it would be. But I am sure that what this shows us is that the fear of the unknown exists so much in our human psyche that we sort of create. In this film especially, we sort of create the conflict within our own humanity and societies."

> "IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST SCRIPTS I HAD EVER READ... IT HAD SUCH AN AMAZING HEART AND SOUL TO IT" AMY ADAMS

The conflict rears its ugly head soon enough. Despite the presence of Dr Banks and physicist Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner), this is a military operation in the US, and all around the world. It's not just a question of Louise convincing Colonel Webber and CIA stooge Agent Halpern (Michael Stuhlbarg) that they need to give these visitors the benefit of the doubt; it's up to her to persuade every superpower that they need to listen to her and not their itchy trigger fingers.

"It is about communication, and lack of communication," she explains. "Louise says something in the opening where she says, 'It's the moments in between.' When we are only focused on the big moments and the big conflicts, we are missing all of the little things that make up a life and make up the texture of our lives, which makes us miss other people. And then we can't communicate clearly when you are not seeing them clearly."

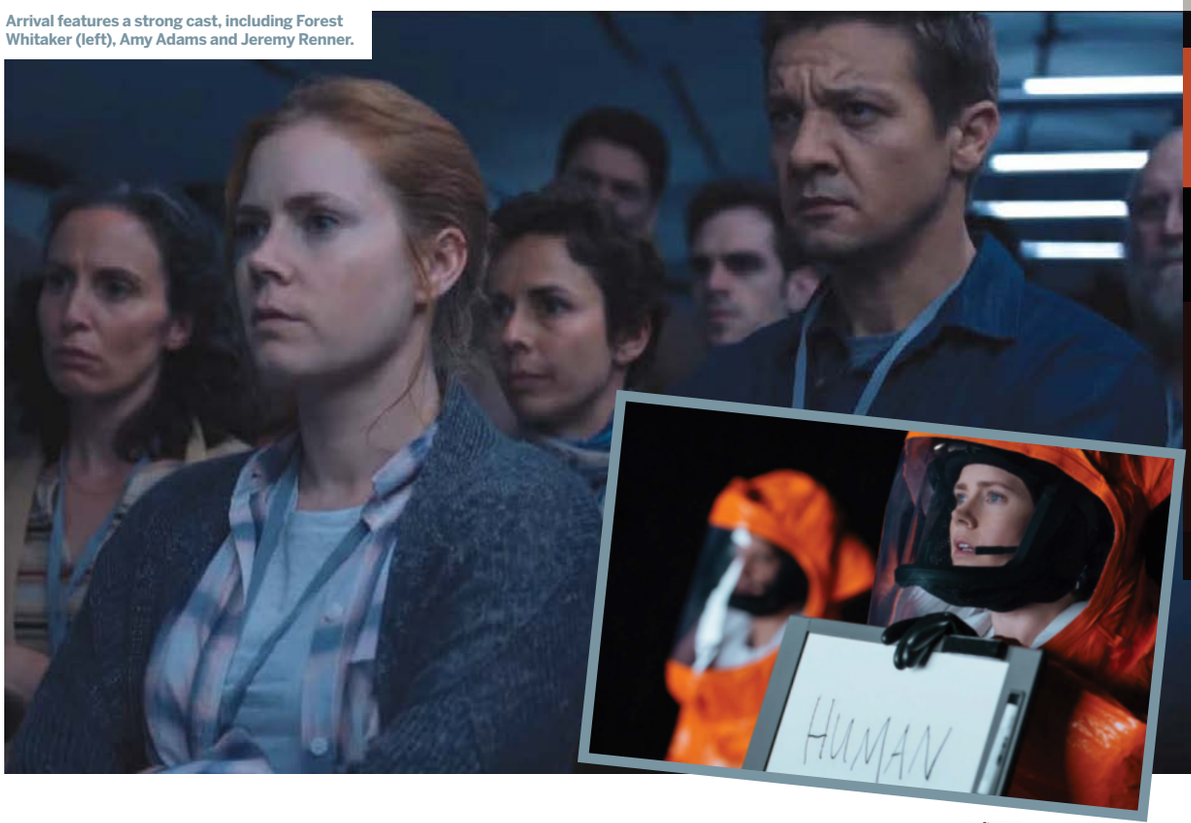
WHILE THE SUPPORTING CAST CERTAINLY ISN'T LIGHTWEIGHT (RENNER AND WHITAKER ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE OF HEADLINING films on their own, and Stuhlbarg is one of our favourite character actors), a lot of *Arrival*'s success rests on Adams' shoulders. With her gift for communication, Banks is the point of true first contact with these beings, and Villeneuve's camera understands the weight of that. Much of her performance is non-verbal, and the close-ups of her face as she goes through this process of understanding are just as powerful as the shots of alien spacecraft.

"There is an extremely complex internal life that I have to communicate





Arrival features a strong cast, including Forest Whitaker (left), Amy Adams and Jeremy Renner.



without a lot of dialogue," she tells us. "I had to build this complex human being without any information that is given in the script. So yeah, it's a lot of preparation, and I have to trust the directors."

"There is a lot of fear, curiosity, hope and pain at the same time," she continues. "I give credit to the director, because he is just wonderful. Denis gave you so much faith in yourself, and I do a bad impersonation of him, so forgive me, but he is always like, 'I am deeply grateful, I deeply love your work.'" she laughs, "And he is very quiet, the set is so calm and beautiful to be on. It was just a joy."

VILLENEUVE HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS ONE OF MODERN CINEMA'S MOST EXCITING DIRECTORS, WORKING IN DIFFERENT GENRES AND LANGUAGES

for an incredible run over the last few years. He really got going in 2010 with searing Middle East-set drama *Incendies*, then in 2013 he had both the mind-bending Cronenbergian sci-fi with *Enemy*, and the gripping missing-kid thriller *Prisoners*. Last year saw him deliver the gripping cartel thriller *Sicario*, and he's sticking with science fiction for his next little film: *Blade Runner 2*, which we're all just a little bit excited about.



So far, *Arrival* has had a positive reception from critics and audiences alike.

"I have not seen his French film," Adams tells us. "But I have seen his other films, and it feels like he is able to redefine the genre with his films, with this emotional core to it. He really seems to have this emotional intelligence, and Denis himself is a very compassionate man. Even the characters that might seem unsympathetic or unlikable, you end up having a connection with them. I think that is because Denis has a very strong connection to humanity himself. He is very much in touch with that."

It will be very interesting to see what audiences make of *Arrival*. At the time of writing it has had rave reviews from festivals like Toronto and Fantastic Fest (and us, incidentally), and we hope this story connects with a huge audience.

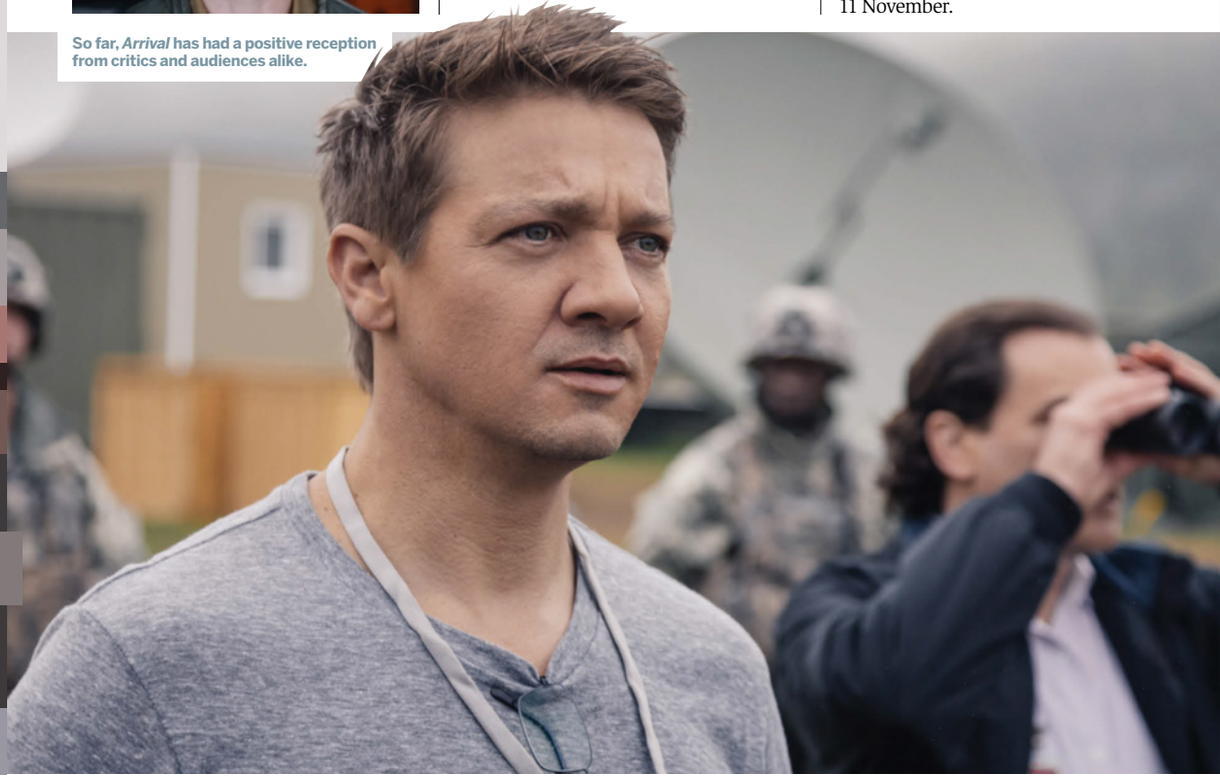
"I was curious about that as well, like 'What will the mainstream audience feel?'" Adams agrees. "I brought my brother, nephew and niece [to see it], and they are very, very honest! My nephew is 11 and niece is 16, and they loved it. I feel like if people can come into it open, this can reach a broad audience. I am really thrilled and proud of this film, and it does hold a special place in my heart. So I am hoping that audiences come to it open and willing to see that."

Arrival will be released in cinemas on 11 November.



Adams' character faces a race against time as the more trigger-happy elements of mankind gather.

> **"DENIS IS ABLE TO REDEFINE THE GENRE WITH HIS FILMS... HE REALLY SEEMS TO HAVE THIS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE"**
> AMY ADAMS



READY FOR A CLOSE ENCOUNTER?

The lessons we've learned from first contacts over the years

DO: BRING A KEYBOARD CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (1977)



We might not speak the same language, but music is universal, man! Crack out the synthesiser, keyboard or keytar and find common ground.

DON'T: STOCK UP ON LEMSIP WAR OF THE WORLDS (2005)



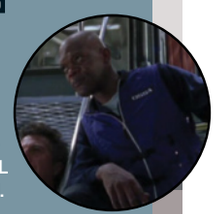
No one likes living with the sniffles, but if the aliens land, hold off on the cold remedies. Your germs could be the key to our survival.

DO: REMEMBER YOUR WIFE'S LAST WORDS - SIGNS (2002)



The love of your life was snatched away from you, but she told you all you needed to know. Tell Merrill to swing away.

DON'T: HAVE NIGHTMARES SPHERE (1998)



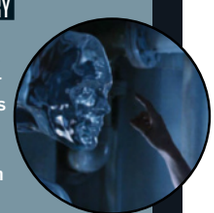
Turns out that the alien sphere at the bottom of the ocean is recreating the fears of the science team sent to investigate it, so don't feed Samuel L Jackson any more squid.

DO: KEEP IT SPIRITUAL CONTACT (1997)



Who knows if God exists? Padre Matthew McConaughey has faith, but scientist Jodie Foster isn't so sure. Meeting her dearly departed dad at the end of a wormhole might change her mind.

DON'T: BRING THE MILITARY THE ABYSS (1989)



An amazing discovery is made on the ocean floor during James Cameron's nightmarish-to-make epic, and freaked-out Navy Seal Michael Biehn nearly ruins everything.

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WORDS **JONATHAN HATFULL**

FUTURE SHOCKS

BLACK MIRROR'S BACK, WITH **MORE EPISODES**, A **BIGGER BUDGET** AND **BIGGER-NAME TALENT. CHARLIE BROOKER** AND **ANNABEL JONES** TELL US WHY GOING TO **NETFLIX DOESN'T MEAN GOING 'DISNEYLAND'**



'AMERICANISED' ISN'T A PHRASE THAT'S OFTEN USED IN A FLATTERING SENSE. WE TEND TO THINK OF IT AS MEANING THAT SOMETHING HAS BEEN HOMOGENISED; THAT IT'S HAD ALL ITS ROUGH EDGES SMOOTHED TO satisfy the broadest possible audience. With the kind of rabid fanbase that *Black Mirror* possesses, you have to imagine that there were some concerns about how the jump from Channel 4 to Netflix would affect the series' gleefully dark and subversive sensibility.

"I'd seen some things where people were going, 'As long as they carry on doing it in the same way and it doesn't become this big, slick American production,'" creator Charlie Brooker tells us. "And you think, 'Well, it would be funny to toy with people, and to literally open in California would be hilarious.'" So that's how sun-kissed series opener 'San Junipero' starts, and as Brooker's self-aware teasing might indicate, it's every bit as sharp as you'd expect.

"It's not suddenly a musical," producer Annabel Jones tells us.

Over the course of two series and one Christmas special, *Black Mirror* became one of the most talked about shows on British TV, especially when it was revealed to be prescient (#PigGate, anyone?). Now it's relocated, it's looking bigger than ever.

> "GENERALLY IN THE STORIES, TECHNOLOGY IS NEVER THE VILLAIN; IT'S ALWAYS OUR CHARACTERS"
> CHARLIE BROOKER

"It's expanded a bit," agrees Brooker. "Also, because we're doing six episodes – so there's six in this season and six in the next one – it means that you want a bit more variety than we've probably done when we did runs of three. If you had too much variety it might destabilise it in some way, whereas when you're doing six you can have a lighter episode and a very dark episode and so on, so that we keep the viewer on their toes, so they realise they don't know necessarily what to expect. Yeah, it's broadened."

"Not in terms of tone, but in terms of scale and story," clarifies Jones. "It hasn't suddenly become broader, more mainstream. It's *Black Mirror* +." ⇨

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AMAZING STORIES

Ranking the greatest anthologies

ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (1955-65)



These days the show might be best known for its introduction featuring the great man himself bidding you "Good evening," but it's a brilliant collection of mystery stories that feature some vintage Hitchcock twists and nastiness. Recommended.
4/5 Serlings

THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1959-64)



Rod Serling's masterpiece was a brilliant blend of political commentary and genre tales. Some of the greatest sci-fi of the era can be found here, each one introduced and closed by the man himself. This is essential viewing.
5/5 Serlings

THE OUTER LIMITS (1963-65)



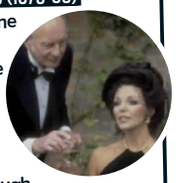
"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission." Leslie Stevens' creation is often compared to *The Twilight Zone*, but it's brilliant in its own right. It had a great revival in 1995.
5/5 Serlings

NIGHT GALLERY (1969-73)



Serling followed *The Twilight Zone* with this, which was much more interested in horror. Creative control battles meant that it veers from brilliant to risible, but when it's good, it's absolutely superb. And Serling introduces it, so that's obviously great.
4/5 Serlings

TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED (1979-88)



Created by Roald Dahl, the British anthology series was mostly based on the author's vicious short stories, including 'The Landlady' and 'William And Mary.' The cast was frequently fantastic, though episodes could be hit and miss.
4/5 Serlings

HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR (1980)



The studio that dripped blood got into the anthology TV series game with this short-lived but occasionally brilliant series, with guest stars including Peter Cushing, Denholm Elliott, Patricia Quinn and a young Brian Cox. Patchy, but fun.
3/5 Serlings



Brooker tells us that there more variety in Season Three, so expect tonal differences.

Once you get over that concern, there's something fantastically exciting about the idea of Brooker and co being able to open the *Black Mirror* world up a bit. There's a terrific cast, including Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Mackenzie Davis, Bryce Dallas Howard, Wyatt Russell and Kelly MacDonald, exciting directors like Dan Trachtenberg (*10 Cloverfield Lane*) and Joe Wright (*Atonement*), and brilliant composers like Clint Mansell, Bear McCreary, Max Richter and Portishead's Geoff Barrow.

"It's more ambitious, I would say," enthuses Brooker. "They're a bit bigger, and we don't have to fit a commercial hour of the television schedule anymore, so they're a bit different – one of them is feature length, for instance. So we're on a slightly bigger canvas, to not sound like too much of a c**t, I hope. Like a semi-c**t! It's challenging, gruelling..."

"It's lunacy!" interjects Jones. "Six films in a year is lunacy!"

That may be the case, but six films in a year is essentially what we've been given, and Brooker tells us that he was keen to make sure as much ground was explored as possible. "We've got a lot of variety," he explains. "So there's optimism, pessimism, horror and all of that. ['San Junipero'] is directed by Owen Harris, who did [Series Two episode] 'Be Right Back', and it's kind of in that vein in many ways. There are other stories in it that are horrible. We haven't gone Disneyland. We've got that balance hopefully, so if you liked 'White Bear' then there's something for you in this season as well."

"We've sort of approached them like different genre pieces," he continues. "So there's a romance, there's a police procedural, which we haven't done before, it's like, 'What's the *Black Mirror* equivalent of a Scandi-noir story?' Hopefully we've answered that. There's a military episode, there's one with no sci-fi at all that's set in the present day, there's a playful social satire with social media and social insecurity, and a horror romp! There's a horror romp from Dan Trachtenberg starring Wyatt Russell with a very heavy videogaming theme. We can do more playful episodes and darker episodes and more poignant episodes. We approached it like curating a film festival, again not wanting to sound too wanky..."

> **"YOU LOOK AROUND AT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MOMENT – HOW DO YOU IMPROVE ON THAT AS A DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE?"**
> CHARLIE BROOKER

WHILE ACTUAL PLOT DETAILS ARE BEING KEPT UNDER WRAPS ("IT'S A DIFFICULT SHOW TO TALK ABOUT, BECAUSE WE'RE SO PRECIOUS about spoiling it," laughs Brooker), there has been no shortage of storyline suggestions from the public. "'What's the Brexit *Black Mirror*?'" laughs Brooker. "People say, 'Oh, you should do a *Black Mirror* about the refugee crisis,' or 'Hey, Hitachi have just invented a hat that makes you fly! Is there a *Black Mirror* in that?' Yeah, that does happen quite a bit, and it's odd because obviously current events in the contemporary world informs what happens in the stories, but also if you look around at what's happening at the moment, how do you improve on that as a dystopian nightmare?"

Armando Iannucci has already said that he won't revive *The Thick Of It* given that our nation's politics are currently beyond satire, and Brooker explains that the process of creating stories for *Black Mirror* is usually less directly inspired by current events.



Wyatt Russell stars in an episode from *10 Cloverfield Lane*'s Dan Trachtenberg.



Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Mackenzie Davis lead the third season's incredible cast.

"Whenever we think along those lines, it doesn't quite work that way," he tells us. "Because that leads you into terms of thinking conceptually, and not in terms of a human dilemma. Usually what happens is we'll be talking about it, and suddenly there'll be some hilarious 'What if?' idea. Often they're 'What if?' ideas to start with, and I start laughing, and [Jones gets] upset by the ramifications of the idea, and that's when we know it's a good *Black Mirror* idea."

"Essentially he keeps going until I'm in tears, and then we go, 'We got it!'" laughs Jones. "Yeah, you get all moved by the storylines, and I'm just howling with laughter," adds Brooker. "Genuinely, there have been times when I've been going 'Oh my god, and this could happen and this,' and you've been crying at how horrible it is."



© Getty

Jones and Brooker's approach was to write until she was crying and he laughing.

BUT AS HORRIBLE AS THINGS WILL GET, BROOKER AND JONES ARE KEEN TO STRESS THAT BLACK MIRROR WILL CONTINUE TO REFLECT HUMANITY, BOTH the good and the bad. Think back to 'White Christmas', for example, which featured technology with terrifying possibilities, but was nowhere near as awful as the people using it.

"Generally in the stories, technology is never the villain," Brooker explains. "It's always our characters. If they have a downfall, they've brought it on themselves in some way, or they bring it about because of technology. So it's probably a more empathetic show than people realise. I know that some people said 'The National Anthem' [in which the PM is blackmailed into copulating with a pig while the nation watches] is extremely misanthropic and 'Oh, is he saying that all those people would tune in to watch that?' I don't think they would; it's a heightened satire. Hopefully, throughout this season you empathise with some of our characters, because that's how you get a foothold. It is a sci-fi show, and it isn't at the same time; it's kind of hard sci-fi in some ways and not sci-fi at all in others, in that it's about human dilemmas."

With a fourth season already confirmed at Netflix and extremely positive buzz coming from the episodes screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (we've seen 'San Junipero', and it is excellent), there's obviously a lot of confidence in the show and its continuing power to get under our skin. Bigger, in this case, could indeed mean better.

"What I love about the show is that I think people are attracted to it, and they do treat them like films," Jones tells us. "Across the board, directors, actors, composers, costume, make-up – it's structured [like a film], and it's attracting a lot of film talent. And I guess Netflix shows you that there's no distinction between film and TV anymore. People think it's a place where they can have a lot of creative fun and maybe take on more challenging ideas, more bold and challenging ideas."

"The ambition of it, the challenge is keeping them all different and surprising, but also making them all *Black Mirror* without repeating what we've done before," adds Brooker. "It's not what you would expect."

Black Mirror Season Three will be out on Netflix from 21 October.

BLACK MIRROR'S MOST UPSETTING MOMENTS SPOILER ALERT!!!

WHITE BEAR (2.02)

It turns out that the people with mobile phones that Victoria (Lenora Crichlow) has been running from are filming her for a reality show, and that her televised terror is her punishment for murdering a young girl. Her memory is wiped, and the hunt begins all over again.

BE RIGHT BACK (2.01)



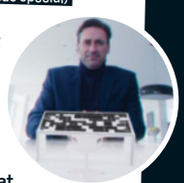
The marvellous Hayley Atwell's grieving Martha grapples with the question of whether or not to destroy the robotic clone of her dead partner Ash (Domhnall Gleeson), finally deciding on a compromise that is absolutely heartbreaking.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM (1.01)



The very first episode of *Black Mirror* builds up to a finale that you can see coming a mile off, but is no less effective, as the entire nation watches the PM violate a pig before it's revealed that the kidnapped princess had already been released. Oink oink.

WHITE CHRISTMAS (Christmas special)



It's hard to pinpoint the most upsetting moment from this special: Oona Chaplin's imprisonment in a piece of tech, the central revelation about Rafe Spall's blocked character, or anything that Jon Hamm's repellent Matt Trent says or does.



INVESTIGATION

Harley Quinn

"WE CAN ALL SEE A BIT OF US IN HARLEY QUINN... SHE'S SMART, SEXY, IMPULSIVE AND DANGEROUS"

JIMMY PALMIOTTI

© DC/Conner



YOU DON'T OWN ME

WORDS
JONATHAN HATFULL

THERE'S NO COMIC-BOOK CHARACTER AS POPULAR AND DIVISIVE AS HARLEY QUINN. SHE'S A FUN, FUNNY, POLYAMOROUS antihero whose villainous attributes are matched by an irrepressible joie de vivre and flair for the dramatic. She can also be a male gaze fantasy that glamourises mental health issues and abuse. She's complicated – or rather, she's complex.

She's also everywhere. The *Harley Quinn* comic written by Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda Conner is topping DC's bestseller list, she's had spin-offs and standalones, she's been dubbed the publisher's fourth pillar with Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman, Margot Robbie is spinning her out of *Suicide Squad* for her own movie, and we haven't even mentioned the cosplayers.
So let's open Harleen Quinzel's file…

HOW DO WE LOVE HARLEY QUINN?

Harley's fandom is huge, vocal and factionalised. Many fans who love *Batman: The Animated Series* were disappointed by *Suicide Squad*'s depiction, and a lot of fans who hated the *Arkham* videogames' Harley have been won over by the recent comics run. "The worst thing you can do is try to reduce the Harley Quinn fandom into a single bloc," comics writer Emma Houxbois tells us. "Because her characterisation was so thin and sometimes self-contradictory until 2013, there has been an incredible amount left up to interpretation, and fans have flooded that space for the last two decades."

HARLEY QUINN HAS NEVER BEEN MORE POPULAR, AND SHE'S NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT. WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE POP CULTURE ICON…

"We can see a bit of all of us in Harley Quinn," Palmiotti agrees. "She is smart, sexy, impulsive and dangerous. You can dress like her and create your own look while still keeping the look of the character. I think everyone sees something different in her."

Harley has struck a chord ever since her first appearance in *B:TAS*. Created by Paul Dini as a female henchman for the Joker and a character for his friend Arleen Sorkin to play, she quickly jumped over into the comics. "I would suggest that Arleen Sorkin's voice talents literally 'spoke' to the fans," opines Will Brooker, cultural studies professor at Kingston University. "It's a great performance with a very distinctive accent."

Her status is such that some have given her the title of 'feminist icon', which is yet another understandably difficult issue, but Houxbois tells us that difficulty is a huge part of what makes her so unique. "I'm going to take a page out of Harley cosplayer Elise Archer's playbook and say that a large part of Harley's appeal in any incarnation is that she defies what gets typically described as a 'feminist icon' in media," Houxbois tells us. "What defines Harley for a lot of people is that she isn't aspirational. She's deeply flawed, there's no weight of expectations on her, and because she's coded as a villain or an antihero, it's easier for her to take strong stances against societal norms"



Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda Conner's (above) *Harley Quinn* series has been a big hit.

MORE THAN MISTER J?

The love story between Joker and Harley is one of the most beloved and criticised relationships in comics, and it's the wellspring of much of the Harley fandom. But is there more to her than that? Is she defined by that relationship?

"I think if she was just a funny, acrobatic character, she wouldn't be so memorable at all, if she'd even lasted this long," opines Brooker. "Harley is the first character who's ever explicitly foregrounded what Joker is like with an intimate partner. Her relationship with Joker is one of her defining traits – which perhaps doesn't say a great deal for her characterisation. If we took that away, what would we have left?"

The character's portrayal in David Ayer's *Suicide Squad* put a lot of emphasis on that relationship, but the comics have, for the most part, been travelling in the opposite direction, with the 2013 run splitting them up and giving Harley a new start for herself in Coney Island. Their most memorable encounter showed her savagely beating Joker and telling him

that she has moved on. "I hate ya fer what ya bring out in me," she says. "It's not my thing... I don' like it... an' I'm done with it. I'm not yer toy anymore, understand?"

"[Harley] has always stood in his shadow in most of the past stories, so it was important to take her out of that relationship and give her a life without the past stopping her from moving forward," Palmiotti explains. "She needed a clean start. We don't avoid dealing with Joker, but whenever he shows up, it does have an emotional effect on Harley, and we try to confront these feelings. He is her ex, and like real life, sometimes they just don't go away. It's a relationship that has a love/hate vibe with the fans. We understand this, and treat it carefully whenever we can."

"At this point, anyone saying that Harley is defined by the Joker either hasn't been paying attention or is flat-out lying," enthuses Houxbois. "Now, we're in a situation where Harley Quinn is the flagship title of the *Rebirth* initiative, and Geoff Johns has christened her the fourth pillar of one of the world's most powerful and recognised brands. Power Girl has appeared alongside Harley more frequently than the Joker has over the last 18 months."







DIAGNOSING DR QUINZEL

The abusive nature of Joker and Harley's relationship has always been one of the more difficult elements of the character, drawing criticism for depicting domestic abuse in this romantic setting. As Brooker points out, these types of issues haven't historically been treated with a great deal of sensitivity in superhero comics. "I enjoy the *Batman* mythos, but I think the last thing it does is represent mental health issues in a sophisticated way, and I don't think it has a great record for exploring domestic and sexual abuse either," he tells us. "And to be fair, I don't think that's its aim."

"There's a lot of retroactive, unearned praise [towards *B:TAS*]," opines Houxbois. "They show the abuse, but it's never really examined in a meaningful way that doesn't lend itself to being romanticised. A key thing about fan engagement with Harley and the Joker as a couple is that no matter how badly executed a given narrative is, the dynamic attracts fans who are engaged in legitimate and healthy BDSM play in their own lives. You can look at a specific comic, cartoon or videogame and break down how harmful the dynamic within that narrative is, but you can also appropriate the imagery and characters to remedy that. There's a big difference between vilifying a specific portrayal and vilifying what some people choose to get out of it. At the same time, there are abuse survivors reaching out to Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda Conner to say that their framing in the current series has been incredibly beneficial to them. "

Harley's continuing journey towards self-actualisation is one of the greatest pleasures of Palmiotti and Conner's run, and he tells us they feel the responsibility for the character very deeply.

"She talks through her emotions, works through her problems and wears her heart on her sleeve," he explains. "When it is time to address the past or current problems, we make sure she deals with it by using her brain. Harley is highly intelligent, and because of her background as a psychiatrist, she understands manipulation and abuse, as well as understanding why someone could find herself in that kind of situation. Our job as her caretakers is to show the emotional conflict and how she dissects it and deals with it. We keep the book light and fun, but take pause when serious issues are addressed from time to time. Like any book and character, there is a delicate balance to be had."



> "AT THIS POINT, ANYONE SAYING THAT HARLEY IS DEFINED BY THE JOKER EITHER HASN'T BEEN PAYING ATTENTION OR IS FLAT-OUT LYING"
> EMMA HOUXBOIS

HARLEY AND IVY

Another example of the character's progress can be found in her relationship with Poison Ivy. Their partnership has been long established, but over the years it became clear that their connection was more than a working one. The romance has finally been made canon, with Conner stating that they are "girlfriends without the jealousy of monogamy."

"Amanda said that on a radio show when we were being interviewed and it



Harley's relationship with the Joker is one of the most talked about – and criticised – in comics.

was something that struck a chord with a lot of the fans," remembers Palmiotti. "The reaction has been great, and we dive into this relationship even more in the coming issues. Harley is a passionate character, and loves everything and everyone important in her life – it's one of the many things we love about her."

DC has struggled in the past with their LGBTQ characters. *Batwoman*'s creative team of JH Williams III and W Haden Blackman quit when they were forbidden from marrying Kate Kane and Maggie Sawyer in 2013. However, it does feel like progress is being made.

"DC is in the middle of a significant tipping point in its portrayal of LGBTQIA issues," explains Houxbois. "There's messiness and growing pains to be sure, but the overall complexion is something that would have been unthinkable even five years ago. Catwoman is officially acknowledged as bisexual, Midnighter is being touted as a major concern, and Wonder Woman's inherent and original queerness has just been reasserted, which means that one half of the company's four flagship characters are queer women."

"More specifically, Conner and Palmiotti have been slowly unspooling a fantastic reconstruction of a relationship that's been treated as either a joke or for the titillation of straight men," she continues. "This has been a steady and well-managed slow burn that had to take Harley through her decisive split from the Joker and establishing herself as an independent woman outside of a relationship. Nothing's being rushed into or handed out for free, which is brilliant."



Over the years, Harley's relationship with Poison Ivy has gradually developed.

WHERE NEXT FOR HARLEY QUINN?

Although Conner and Palmiotti have been great for Harley, there are always going to be concerns about her next depiction. "If you have a creative team made up of male chauvinist pigs, then yes, trying to examine abusive relationship dynamics or queer sexuality is going to go careening off a cliff before it even starts," opines Houxbois. "The key thing about the Conner/Palmiotti approach is that they can segue into addiction, racism, consent, or gentrification as dominant themes in a story, but they're going to break it up with some ultraviolence or a poop joke to keep things moving. It's just good storytelling."

"I would welcome a story that explored her psychology in a considered way," Brooker tells us. "A story that looked sympathetically into her motivations and tried to make sense of what shaped her, why she does what she does, what her clownish performance is covering up, how she really feels about Joker and why – a story about cycles of abuse and coping mechanisms – would be something different. Would it be fun to read? Probably not. I think without the fun aspect, she would be an incredibly depressing character."

While Brooker acknowledges that this is unlikely to happen, we're encouraged by the character's development in print, even if we're a little anxious about other media. Wherever she goes, it is clear that there will be a fanbase following her, even if they don't agree on everything.

"The key to getting Harley right is to understand we are dealing with a character that is genuinely intelligent, reacts at times without hesitation, and because of that can be dangerous, and working with a character that looks at the world as something that is put there to entertain her," says Palmiotti. "Harley is a wish-fulfilment character with a ton of heart. She has a particular and defined awareness of what is right and wrong, and isn't afraid of getting her hands dirty in the process of dealing with it. "

Jimmy Palmiotti is the writer of DC's *Harley Quinn* series with Amanda Conner. Will Brooker is a writer and academic, the author of *Batman Unmasked*, *Hunting The Dark Knight* and *Many More Lives Of The Batman*. Emma Houxbois is a writer and journalist with a monthly column in *London Graphic Novel Network*.

CAVALCADE OF COSTUMES

How cosplay has influenced Harley Quinn

There's the original one-piece harlequin jester's outfit from the animated series and early comics, there's the somewhat grotty leather-corset-and-fishnets-combo from the *Arkham* videogames, the roller derby outfit from the new comics, and there's her hair, which went from blonde to blue-and-red, back to blonde. Each incarnation of Harley Quinn has inspired countless fans and cosplayers to recreate it, and it's not a one-way street.

"As the series became more popular, we were inspired by the amazing amount of creativity the cosplayers have had making their own costumes and showing them off online and at the conventions," Jimmy Palmiotti tells us. "Amanda applies this kind of thinking in just about each and every cover. It's wonderful to hear a fan say they will be making the outfit from this or that issue for the next show we go to, and we celebrate their creativity each and every time. A dream for us is to feature some of these wonderful people in an issue at some point. Harley is one of the very few characters in comics that can change her look monthly and still is totally 'Harley.'"





DEMIGODS AND MONSTERS

WE SPEAK TO THE CREW OF MOANA ABOUT THE ROCK, THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AND WHY THIS 16-YEAR-OLD NAVIGATOR FROM MOTU NUI WILL BE LEADING THE WAY FOR DISNEY PRINCESSES THE WORLD OVER...

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER** INTERVIEWS **POPPY-JAY PALMER, ADAM TANSWELL**



ONE OF THE MOST INSTANTLY NOTICEABLE THINGS ABOUT MOANA IS THAT, AT LEAST IN APPEARANCE, SHE'S NOT LIKE MOST DISNEY PRINCESSES.

Where characters like Anna, Elsa and Rapunzel are all limbs with impossibly small waists, Moana is actually pretty proportional. Sure, she's still got Disney's trademark giant eyes, but her body type looks like it could function how it's supposed to.

"I think an effort was obviously made to make her feel very athletic," says Bill Schwab, the film's art director of characters, "because we knew she was going to be an adventurer, a voyager and an action hero, so that was a big part of it. Anatomy was a huge deal. We spent an enormous amount of time trying to get that right on this film."

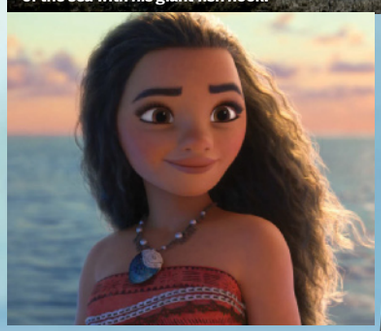
As well making a conscious effort to get Moana to look more like a young woman, as opposed to a caricature, the crew also wanted her personality to be that of a hero rather than a classic damsel in distress. "As a father with two daughters, I'm really proud of how we portrayed her," says head of story Dave Pimentel. "When she has a problem, she solves it herself, and she doesn't look to others. She's very independent."

"I think with every movie, we try to evolve the characters and the type of storytelling, and from early on, the idea that this would be more of a hero's journey story," adds screenwriter Jared Bush. "Moana is really setting out to save the world. The world is literally ending, and she has to stop that in a very short amount of time, so there's not a whole lot of time for her to find romance. That's not really her thing, anyway; she's 16 years old. She's really trying to find herself, and to go and do this, and so we always thought of her as more of a badass hero out there trying to save the world more than a typical romance story."

Producer Osnat Shurer tells us that Moana, unique and empowered, is a modern heroine, even though her story is set in the distant past. "But she couldn't have been imagined onto the screen if not



In the legend, Maui fished islands out of the sea with his giant fish hook.





Right from the early concept art, *Moana*'s story was painstakingly charted.

for the heroines that came before her – from Ariel to Tiana, and Elsa to Elastigirl," she adds. "That said, Moana owes just as much to action heroes of any gender. Moana is a beautiful young woman, and she can kick ass when it's called for!"

Even Moana's outfit deviates from the regular Disney mould in the best possible way, but it caused a few problems design-wise. "One of the challenges was creating outfits that we didn't really have reference to," says costume designer Neysa Bové. "There's no photographic evidence of what they wore, exactly, 3,000 years ago. We had a lot of creative part in there, but we were trying to stay true to the cultures."

Bové and the film's animators have also solved a hair dilemma that a fair few Disney fans have been stressing over for years. "Hair plays a big part," Bové tells us. "She wears it down, but when you're on a boat, and you need to do things, as a girl, what do you do? Put your hair up. We put her hair up in a bun, and it's actually ⋙

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really appropriate for the cultures, because for a lot of the headdresses they wear, they do put their hair up in a bun. It just fit nicely."

"I don't think we've ever done much hair interaction, but it's always sort of a no-no," admits Schwab. "It's very expensive, but they wrote software specific for this film. It's a huge part of her character."

THE PITCH FOR MOANA CAME ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO WHEN CO-DIRECTOR JOHN MUSKER THOUGHT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING AN animated film set in the arena of the Pacific. He and co-director Ron Clements started reading up on Polynesian mythology, and learned about the demigod Maui, a larger-than-life cultural icon and an immensely powerful shapeshifter armed with a fishhook.

"The gorgeous setting and Maui became our jumping-off points," Musker tells us, "and in diving deeper into research we broadened and deepened the storyline from lessons we learned during research trips to the area while connecting with master navigators, cultural experts, archeologists, linguists, master tattooists and beyond from the islands – so as much as the locale influenced us, so did the people."

For a film set in the South Pacific but made in the West, *Moana*'s crew partook in a pretty impressive amount of research. "We begin all of our projects with research," says Jessica Julius, the creative executive in development at Disney. "It's a huge component of everything that we do. We start at the usual places; books, online resources, local experts and that kind of thing. Once we know the foundation of what we are learning, we really always want to go into an actual site visit, so we take research trips. Sometimes those are local, but for this movie we were also able to go into specific islands.



Moana (Auli'i Cravalho) teams up with Maui (Dwayne Johnson) while trying to save her home island of Motu Nui.

> "WE WERE SO INSPIRED BY WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, AND FELT THIS SHOULD DRIVE THE FILM"
> BILL SCHWAB

"This was the initial trip with the filmmakers, and there's hundreds of islands in the Pacific, right? So we had to choose a few for the first one, and so we ended up in Fiji, and Samoa, Tahiti and Mo'orea. There's nothing like actually going to a place to really experience it. And to really see everything, hear everything, smell everything, meet people, see places, really immerse yourself in a place then you really get a sense of what something is like. You just can't get that from watching movies or reading books."

"[After the second research trip, we] came back with this incredible wealth of photography from research from the islands," explains Schwab. "I think we were so inspired by this and what a beautiful place, what a beautiful people, and really felt at this time that this should drive the style of the film. Let's make



As the above images show, the animators kept wiping the slate clean to wow with Moana.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Kelly Kanayama, a storyteller from Hawaii who now resides in the UK, speaks to us about Maui's origins, Polynesian representation and other myths and legends...

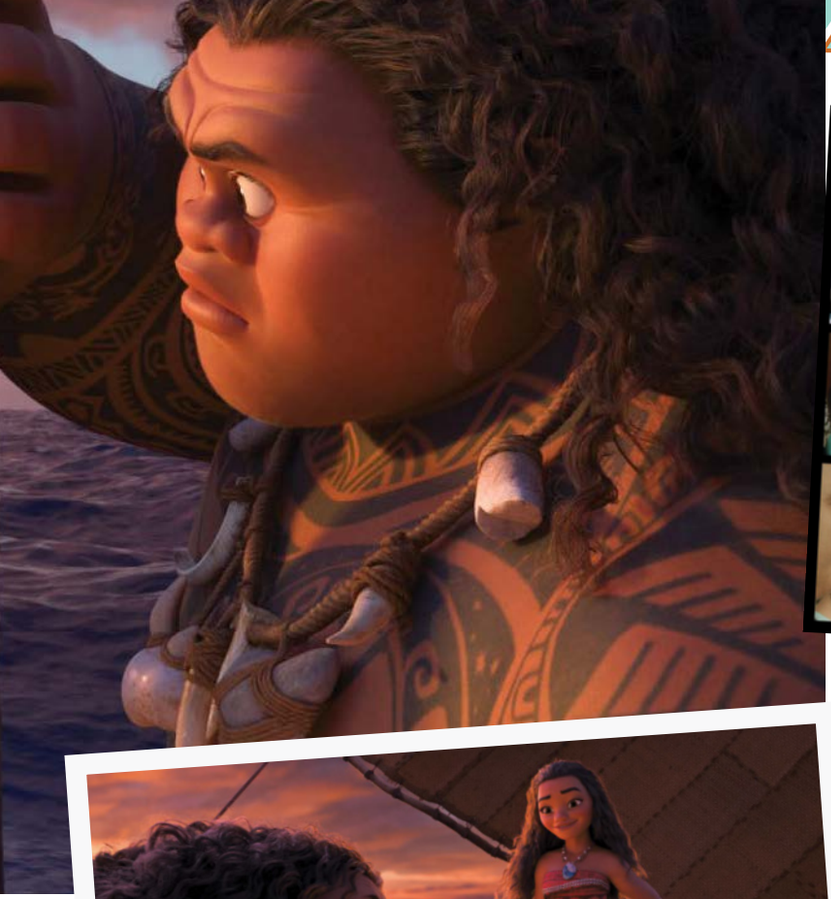
Did you grow up hearing stories and myths in Hawaii?
Yeah! Everybody grows up in Hawaii with myths and legends, from really specific local ones to big ones that explain things like where the Hawaiian Islands come from. Israel Kamakawiwo'ole has got a song called 'Hawaiian Superman', which is about Maui. It's about all the things that Maui did, and I remember hearing it on the radio in my dad's car.

Who exactly is Maui?
Maui is a demigod. He's sort of a trickster figure, but like trickster figures in a lot of other cultures he's a major player in the creation of the world as we know it. He pulled the islands out of the sea with his fishhook. I'm hoping *Moana* follows through on depicting Maui as a strong, eminently capable character, because on the rare occasions when Pacific Islander men do show up as characters in mainstream media they're either obese comic-relief sidekicks or savages.

What do you think of Disney's representation of the culture?
It's hard to say just from [the trailers], because it seems to be this very [fantastical version of] Pacific Island representation, which I guess makes sense. You don't want to take a particular culture and then have someone say, "Oh no, you got it wrong." If they make it more fantastical then they are covering all the bases. I'm intrigued by Maui's moving tattoos. I'd like to see what kind of part they play in the story as a whole. I'm glad they've got them because they play a big part in the Polynesian and Pacific Island cultures. I'm also really happy that they cast an actual Polynesian actress to do the main voice. It's a shame they didn't use all Pacific Islanders to do the music, but eh! One step at a time.

After the legend of Maui, which other myths would you like to see on screen?
I'd love to see some Pele stuff, because they're very hard-hitting myths. Being a fire goddess and everything, she's very hot-tempered and passionate. When people think of myths, I think there's still this very male-centric view of it, and having something like that at the centre of the story could be really interesting. Not necessarily in a stereotypical 'strong female character' way. Of course she's strong; she's a goddess! She is what she is, and through that comes stories and really great myths, and things that still affect the way people live today.

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Moana is unlike other Disney princesses, both in appearance and character.

this feel like real people from a real place."

Being of Samoan descent himself, story artist David Derrick was eager to join the film and explore visual and storytelling possibilities the rich Polynesian culture offered. "I was at a different studio, and Dave Pimentel, a good friend of mine, contacted me and said, 'This is a movie that's going to be set in ancient Samoa, Polynesia. You should come,'" he tells us, "and of course, I dropped what I was doing and I came. The film inspired me to go on my own pilgrimage to understand my own heritage, and so I ended up taking my family on our own research trip.

"When Dave first called me, I didn't even hesitate. I sent my stuff into Disney, and I went out to my ancestor's grave market, the first ancestor that came to America, and I did a rubbing. Every single day that I've worked on this film, I've had that above my desk to remind me why I work on this movie, and it's really to celebrate an incredible culture that has been overlooked."

Shurer says it's essential that films represent the diversity of humanity. "When we see ourselves on the screen, we become more aware then ever before of the incredible possibilities open to us," she tells us. "For me, the awareness that there are myriad ways of experiencing and understanding the world and our place in it gives us all great hope."

MOANA'S DIVERSITY EXTENDS TO ITS TALENTED CAST, WHICH INCLUDES TEMUERA MORRISON, JEMAINE CLEMENT, NICOLE SCHERZINGER, Dwayne Johnson and newcomer Auli'i Cravalho. Cravalho and Johnson are at the top of the bill as Moana and Maui, a 16-year-old navigator and a demigod. Before they meet, Moana spent her childhood on her island of Motu Nui hearing stories about Maui, and how his actions created a darkness over the South Pacific. When Moana eventually comes face-to-face with the demigod, she convinces him to join her on her mission to help save Motu Nui.

"Dwayne and Auli'i both bring tremendous energy to their roles," says Clements. "They fit their characters extremely well. DJ is a bit of a demigod himself, and a larger than life character. He's charming, funny and great to work with, like Maui, who is a very fun, light character, but there are some serious parts of Maui that DJ has done such a great job diving into. He also gets to sing, and is a great singer! He was cast before Auli'i, and there was a question if we could find the match for DJ, but we found the perfect match in Auli'i."

Cravalho, who grew up in Oahu, Hawaii, was just 14 years old when she auditioned for the role of Moana, making her closer in age to her character than most Disney princess voice actors. "She's fearless, feisty, cheeky and fun, and willing to take on all challenges, and embodies so much of the spirit and courage of what makes Moana special," continues Clements. "In my mind, they fuse together – DJ and Maui are the same, and Auli'i and Moana are the same."

"I love character dynamics, and so Moana and Maui together, I really enjoyed writing the two of them playing off on each other," Bush tells us. "Moana as a character, for me, that's really exciting. It's really cool to write just a heroic character who's a badass who goes and handles things, and we kept putting her into worse situations for her to have to find a way out of, and for her to be able to do that in a way that felt realistic for a 16-year-old, because she can't be a superhero. She's 16, and has to feel real.

"For her to be able to hold her own against a demigod like Maui, who's this huge personality, for her character to not get swallowed by [him] means you have to find really interesting special things, and Auli'i brought a lot of those things to the movie, little quirks and fun little bits of personality that made her pop."

With the importance of Moana's hair, the ocean, the sand and all the rest of it, the film was extremely ambitious and the animation process was taxing, but the crew agree that it was totally worth it. "We've created *Moana* ten times over, with each time honing in on what you will eventually see," says Pimentel.

"Yeah, sometimes that's not a small change," adds Bush. "It's not saying, 'Okay, here's basically it, and we'll change five per cent.' Sometimes it's 100 per cent of the movie that goes away, and it all starts from scratch again."

"Everybody is emotionally involved," says Derrick. "We put our heart and soul into it. We fight for our ideas, or fight for the idea that should be right or that should be wrong, but inevitably we all hold hands organically and say, 'This is what we're going to do.'" ☙

Moana will be released in cinemas on 2 December.



WE WANT WHAT THE ROCK IS COOKING

An acting credit from Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson could make any film better. For example...

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE

The 152 minutes of mediocrity we had to sit through would fly by with Johnson behind the masks. In this version, the battle of the century would end abruptly when Batman and Superman realise that they're both played by the Rock.

PIXELS

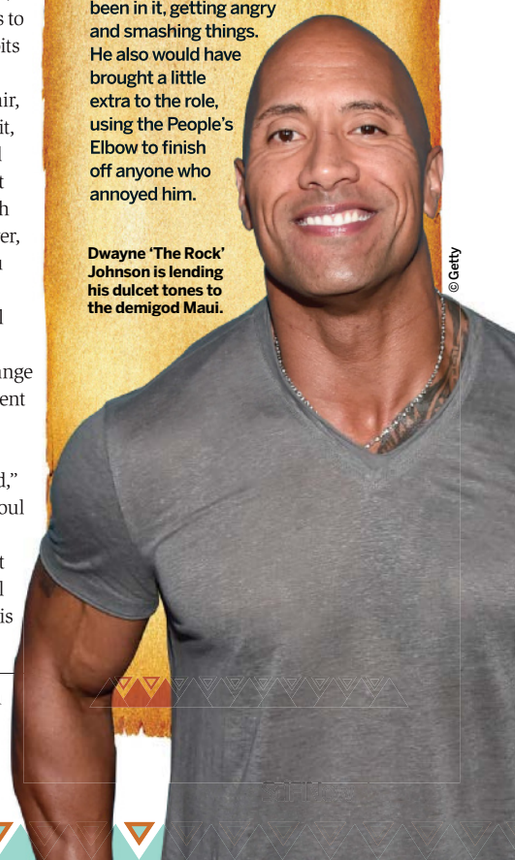
There's no way *Pixels* could get any worse, so we might as well find a way to go back in time and cast the Rock in the lead role. In an ideal world, none of the other characters would exist. It would just be 106 minutes of the Rock versus Pac-Man.

GODZILLA

Obviously the Rock would play Godzilla, but he wouldn't just be providing the voice or the motion capture. He would just be himself, but massive. No one would want to shoot him down though. The Rock is too darn lovely for that.

HULK

Marvel probably wouldn't have deleted Hulk from its memory if the Rock had been in it, getting angry and smashing things. He also would have brought a little extra to the role, using the People's Elbow to finish off anyone who annoyed him.



Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson is lending his dulcet tones to the demigod Maui.

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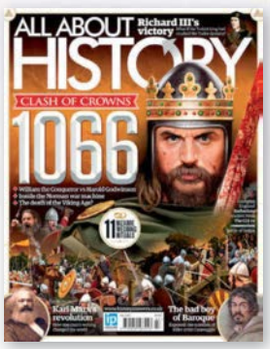
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58

MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

"FEELS LIKE A BIT OF A MISSED OPPORTUNITY, BUT THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL FLOURISHES"

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TRIVIA BARRON – SAMUEL L JACKSON'S CHARACTER – IS A NEW CREATION FOR THE BOOKS.

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FILM INFO

Released
Out now
Certificate
12A
Director
Tim Burton
Screenwriter
Jane Goldman
Cast
Asa Butterfield, Eva Green, Ella Purnell, Samuel L Jackson, Judi Dench, Chris O'Dowd, Terence Stamp, Allison Janney
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Running Time
127 mins



We're all strange here

MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

Tim Burton seems like the perfect choice for the film adaptation of Ransom Riggs' delightful novel, but giving Burton material that he should be a perfect fit for doesn't always work out. *Alice In Wonderland*, *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* – he's got form when it comes to disappointingly anodyne adaptations of rich source material. The question of which Burton will show up is a big one for fans of the novel, and frustratingly, we get glimpses of both here.

When *Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children* comes to life, it's great: weird, dark, scary, and all about embracing what makes you special and unique, with a wonderful performance from Eva Green. But it's often strangely plodding, strapping on led boots when it should be soaring.

American teen Jake (Asa Butterfield) grew up listening to his grandfather Abe's (Terence Stamp) stories about a refuge for children who were special. After the old man's death, Jake discovers that Miss Peregrine and her home are real, and convinces his father (Chris O'Dowd) to take him to the remote Welsh island.



The home was bombed to ruins during World War II, but when Jake investigates, he discovers that Miss Peregrine (Green) and her charges are alive and well, kept safe inside a time loop that replays the day before destruction. They live in harmony, but there's something evil coming.

After a lovely sepia opening credit sequence, there's a needle-jump as the film begins in boring suburban Florida. Of course, Burton needs to create contrast, but the film takes too long to get things moving, and this dull, oppressive atmosphere is a little too convincing. The first half hour is a slog that even actors like O'Dowd and Allison Janney can't enliven.

Thankfully, the film perks up, and when we're in the company of Miss Peregrine and her charges, it's easier to overlook things like the ludicrous amount of exposition (no one wants to explain things to Jake, but they do it a lot), or some of the clunkier dialogue, which Butterfield struggles with in the first half. He improves greatly once the stakes are raised, and he's helped by the excellent supporting cast.

It's great to see Green having this much fun as Miss P, who's warm, eccentric and quick to grin, but deadly serious about protecting her charges, while Samuel L Jackson is on top form as the horrifying Mr Barron, a shape-shifting monster who feasts on the eyeballs of Peculiars.

We should also note that all of the Peculiars are excellent. So good, in fact, that it's kind of a problem; they're missed when they're not there. Ella Purnell's lighter-than-air Emma, Pixie Davies' super-strong Bronwyn and Finlay McMillan's grumpy re-animator Enoch stand out, with the latter delivering some of the best set pieces as he brings his nightmarish creations to life.

Speaking of nightmarish, the script nods heavily towards the Nazi persecution allegory, with the gifted children hunted to extinction by an experimenting monster, and there is a real sense of threat whenever these Hollows are around. It's definitely a family film, but it's nice to see that Burton still understands that younger audiences like a good scare as much as we do, and the final showdown is a nice blend of creepiness and action.

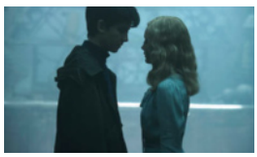
Given what the film could have been, this feels like a bit of a missed opportunity, but there are some wonderful visual flourishes, incredible costume designs, some genuinely affecting relationships, and when it all comes together, this is an easy film to like. It's just a shame that it merits such an ordinary sentiment as 'likeable'.

Jonathan Hatfull

SciFiNow scored **5** for
Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

THE MISS PEREGRINE'S GLOSSARY

Get down with the lingo of Miss P's world



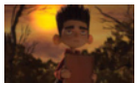
Peculiar
A peculiar is someone who has special gifts or abilities, from super strength to having teeth in the back of their head. Collectively, they're known as Syndrigasti.

Ymbrine
A special type of peculiar who can control time. These women establish and run the time loops, and can turn into birds. They put taking care of their children above everything.

Hollow
A peculiar who has turned into a monster, and hunts peculiars for their eyes in the hope that they can return to a human form if they eat enough. Short for 'Hollowgast'.

Loops
A time bubble where the Peculiars can live in secret and in safety. If the Ymbrine in charge of the loop does not reset it every 24 hours, it will collapse.

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



ParaNorman
A young boy who can see the dead must save his town in Laika's brilliant zombie movie.

TRIVIA EMMA (ELLA PURNELL) AND OLIVE'S (LAUREN MCCROSTIE) PECULIARITIES OF AIR AND FIRE HAVE BEEN SWAPPED FROM THE BOOK OF *MISS PEREGRINE'S*.

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ARRIVAL
A mind scramble

Details 12A // 116 mins // 11 November **Director** Denis Villeneuve **Screenwriter** Eric Heisserer **Cast** Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker **Distributor** Entertainment One



The adaptation of Ted Chiang's high-concept novella, *The Story Of Your Life*, by director Denis Villeneuve (*Sicario*) and screenwriter Eric Heisserer (*Lights Out*) is extremely smart, yet delivers on the emotional heft.

When 12 black pods land at random points across the globe, including China, Russia and the USA, linguist expert Dr Louise Banks (Amy Adams) is called upon to investigate. She is joined by theoretical physicist Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner), who aids her in the quest to communicate with the aliens.

Adams turns in a convincing and raw performance as the quick-witted problem solver who leads the charge. She's passionate about sharing information with other countries to move forward, but her ideals don't match with those higher-up, which leads to problems in trying to preserve a united front. It shares a similar political philosophy with *Pacific Rim*, though the two couldn't be more different in style. Villeneuve opts for slow-burning tension and a battle against the destructive actions and instincts of the human race.

The entire film is designed to challenge perception and the way we interpret the world around us. At first, our eyes are drawn to one of the mysterious black pods where we witness the initial exploration.



The team are able to revolve upside down in a tunnel, a scary and very disorientating leap thanks to the way Villeneuve plays with depth of field.

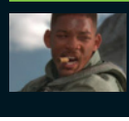
The marriage of science and language and the questioning of time and memory makes for woozy and intense viewing. It's a verbose and dense dialectic on the way the human brain functions, and you're left never quite knowing if what you're watching is fantasy or reality.

Occasionally the film does get bogged down in communicating its message of understanding and unity. Some of the reveals probably worked better on paper, but thankfully it all comes together with a touching and eye-opening ending.

Katherine McLaughlin

8 SciFiNow scored **8** for Arrival
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Independence Day
When aliens attack, the world goes to war in Roland Emmerich's explosive sci-fi extravaganza.



TRAIN TO BUSAN
Somewhat lacking in bite

Details 15 // 118 mins // Out now **Director** Yeon Sang-ho **Screenwriter** Yeon Sang-ho **Cast** Yoo Gong, Dong-seok Ma, Woo-sik Choi **Distributor** StudioCanal



The fourth feature and first live-action film from director Yeon Sang-ho (who made the bleak animation *King Of Pigs)* fuses the zombie apocalypse with old-school disaster blockbusters. It plays out like an overly sentimental blend of *The Poseidon Adventure* and *Dawn Of The Dead*, only set on a high-speed train headed to Busan.

On the doomed locomotive, we meet a single father and his young daughter, who are finding it hard to connect due to the fact that he works too much; an expecting couple in love; two elderly sisters, and a high-school baseball team. There's also a villainous CEO who is only looking out for himself. Sang-ho is concerned with how the underclass are affected by the actions of the rich. He lays it on a bit too thick at times with declarations of love and condemnations of capitalism, but also delivers some exhilarating action sequences.

His undead are raging, ravenous beings who can run at a quick pace in a similar style to those in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, and there's an impressively choreographed chase sequence that sees a mass of soldiers crashing through glass atop the train.



The sense of mad panic is ably conveyed, but the director is also nifty at the quieter scenes, with one scene in which the passengers use sound to distract the zombies proving to be edge-of-your seat stuff.

However, when it comes to the heroes of the piece, this train rolls backwards in regards to gender, with three generations of men taking it upon themselves to save the women, who mostly cower in the corner. Dong-seok Ma as the muscular father-to-be gets to kick some serious zombie ass, and brings a great sense of humour to the film.

It's a shame then that the women get sidelined, but at least the young daughter, Soo-an (Soo-an Kim), gets to demonstrate her courage in terms of riding against a pack mentality.

Train To Busan is a viciously entertaining ride for the most part, but it's bookended with a needless introductory sequence and a cheesy ending that borders on comical. Removal of these flaccid parts would have made it a slicker journey.

Katherine McLaughlin

6 SciFiNow scored **6** for Train To Busan
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Snowpiercer
Bong Joon-ho's post-apocalyptic train ride, based on the graphic novel, speeds along in first-class style.

TRIVIA SCIENTIST AND TECH INNOVATORS STEPHEN WOLFRAM AND HIS SON CHRISTOPHER WOLFRAM ACTED AS CONSULTANTS FOR *ARRIVAL*.



SciFiNow Must see now!

THE GREASY STRANGLER

It's a greasy, greasy world

Details 18 // 93 mins // Out now **Director** Jim Hosking **Screenwriters** Jim Hosking, Toby Harvard **Cast** Michael St Michaels, Sky Elobar, Elizabeth De Razzo, Gil Gex **Distributor** Picturehouse Entertainment



It's hard to describe *The Greasy Strangler*. It's weird, disgusting, and... greasy. But it's also quite unique; a confrontationally odd experience that will alienate many, and find fans who are looking for a little 'confrontationally odd' in their lives.

It's a vomit-inducing hybrid of John Waters, Troma, *Kids In The Hall*, *Tim And Eric*, the grimiest of Eighties slashers and *The League Of Gentlemen*. We were shocked, we were nauseated, and we giggled a lot.

Big Brayden (Sky Elobar) is a man who lives with his father, Big Ronnie (Michael St Michaels). By day they run a highly suspect disco walking tour, and by night Big Ronnie is the Greasy Strangler, murdering people while wearing nothing but a thick layer of grease. When Brayden falls for Janet (Elizabeth De Razzo), will it drive the jealous Ronnie over the edge?

Director Jim Hosking and his co-writer, Toby Harvard, have such a clear idea of what they want to do that there's not much effort made to accommodate anyone who's not on board. They've created a world with nothing normal to act as a baseline for the weirdness, and dialogue that's deliberately corny, fantastically coarse and just plain odd.

Elobar's Brayden is a man-child who's stifled at every turn by his grease-demanding father, and St Michaels' performance is fantastically monstrous, but Hosking delivers a film to match. You never question that Ronnie could survive in the downtown of *The Greasy Strangler*, even as he emerges from a car wash buck-naked and pulls a (fake) ten-dollar bill out of... well, guess.

There are moments of weird sensitivity, too. Ronnie and Brayden are wounded easily, and both actors are as capable of playing that as they are flashing grotesque prosthetic phalluses.

Most importantly, it's well made, impressing with its sincerity and quality. You may well be irritated by its humour and revolted by what it has to offer, but we think it's fantastic.

Jonathan Hatfull



8 SciFiNow scored **8** for The Greasy Strangler

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



AAAAAAAAH!
Steve Oram's vision of an ape-like future is equally complete and weird



OUJIA: ORIGIN OF EVIL

Terrible title, superior prequel

Details 15 // TBC // 21 October **Director** Mike Flanagan **Screenwriters** Mike Flanagan, Jeff Howard **Cast** Elizabeth Reaser, Annalise Basso, Lulu Wilson, Henry Thomas, Doug Jones **Distributor** Universal



We didn't think anything was going to get us excited about a sequel to 2014's crushingly routine Blumhouse horror *Ouija*, but we didn't reckon on the addition of director Mike Flanagan and writer Jeff Howard. The director and writers of *Oculus* and *Absentia* add a much-needed dose of personality, elevating it from a cash-in prequel to something much more entertaining.

It's 1967, and medium Alice Zander (Elizabeth Reaser) is struggling to pay the bills with her carefully constructed and entirely phoney readings, aided by her two daughters: teenage Paulina (Annalise Basso) and young Doris (Lulu Wilson). In an effort to scare up some business, Alice adds a Ouija board to the act, but the family is stunned when spirits from the other side make an appearance through Doris.

The amount of fun that Flanagan and his team are obviously having with the period setting is contagious, right from the vintage Universal logo and the fantastic title card. It feels like so much more love and care has gone into this. The script takes its time establishing the Zanders' situation before bringing in the evil spirits, and the use of grief as a main theme gives it a strong emotional anchor.

It helps that the cast is so good. Reaser (*Young Adult*, *Twilight*) makes the most of her leading role with a warm and witty performance, and Basso (*Oculus*, *Captain Fantastic*) puts in another very strong turn as Paulina, who starts to realise that she's going to have to step up and make some difficult choices. Much of the film's scare factor relies on Wilson, and the young actress is a sympathetic and increasingly creepy presence.

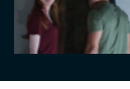
Things do get wobbly as the film moves into the final third, as an over-reliance on CGI starts to undermine the careful work, and it does feel like the filmmakers are constrained by having to tie it all into the previous film. However, Flanagan does manage to spring one or two nicely ghoulish surprises as it moves towards the inevitable conclusion, and this is a fun, spooky and far superior prequel.

Jonathan Hatfull

6 SciFiNow scored **6** for Oujia: Origin of Evil

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Oculus
Flanagan and Howard's 2013 chiller is brilliantly constructed and profoundly affecting.

TRIVIA BEN WHEATLEY AND ELIJAH WOOD ARE TWO OF *THE GREASY STRANGLER*'S PRODUCERS.

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ATTACK OF THE LEDERHOSEN ZOMBIES

Fashion victim

Details 18 // 78 mins // 2016 // DVD • Blu-ray // **Released** 7 November
Director Doiminik Hartl **Cast** Laurie Calvert, Gabriela Marcinková, Oscar Dyekjær Giese, Margarete Tiesel, Karl Fischer **Distributor** Screenbound Pictures



The opening sequence of *Attack Of The Lederhosen Zombies*, contrary to what you might expect from the title, hints at the possibility of a film that has more in common with genre progenitor *Dawn Of The Dead* than what we've come to anticipate from today's standard straight-to-DVD undead fare.

All wide-open panning shots and decidedly eerie forbidding, a real sense of place is developed on the snowy mountaintop, which plays host to a time-passing group of youngsters who find themselves stranded in the resort after one of them blows their chances of a sporting contract. Meanwhile, a deadly virus is spiralling out of control, and it's not long before… well, you know the rest.

Despite featuring the word 'zombie', it's got to the point where just having this in the title doesn't mean that it's a horror movie anymore – which is just as well, as there's absolutely nothing scary about this whatsoever. Instead, the filmmakers spend more time trying to savage your funny bone rather than viewers' stomachs, and while there's some success (a prolonged deathbed attempt at poignant final words hits home), ultimately it feels slightly laboured.

It doesn't help that the young leads all deliver fairly bland and unrelatable performances – standing in contrast to the (far better) older cast members, particularly Margarete Tiesel (*Paradise: Love*) as one of the survivors. Still, the film ultimately suffers through its lack of people to root for – most of the leads are so irritating that it's genuinely hard to be bothered about whether they live or die, thus eradicating some vital suspense.



Still, it at least tries to do something a bit different with a sub-genre that long became saturated past the point of no return. It falls firmly into the 'disposable fun' category, but ultimately it isn't much more than that.

Steve Wright

SciFiNow scored **5** for Attack Of The Lederhosen Zombies
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Dawn Of The Dead
The opening scenes are reminiscent of George Romero's zombie classic.

TALES OF HALLOWEEN All treat

Details 18 // 92 mins // 2015 // Blu-ray • DVD // **Released** Out now **Directors** Various **Cast** Kristina Klebe, Pollyanna McIntosh, Marc Senter, Alex Essoe, Lin Shaye, Sam Witwer, John Landis **Distributor** Arrow



We love a good Halloween-set horror, and evidently so do the filmmakers of *Tales Of Halloween*, the tongue-in-cheek anthology movie coordinated by Axelle Carolyn. The directors include Neil Marshall, Lucky McKee, Paul Solet, Mike Mendez and Carolyn herself, and there's a real sense of glee as this bunch takes on every horror fan's favourite time of year.

Standouts include McKee's deeply weird *Hansel And Gretel* riff, in which Pollyanna McIntosh's witch wants a little one of her own; Carolyn's genuinely creepy 'Grim Grinning Ghost'; Ryan Schifrin's hilarious 'The Ransom Of Rusty Rex', and Dave Parker's tone-setting opener 'Sweet Tooth', in which a kid goes to great lengths to get his candy back from his parents.



As with any anthology horror, a couple of the shorts don't quite measure up, but it's consistent. The stories are linked by a radio DJ played by Adrienne Barbeau, making it a must-see. Fast, funny and fiendish, this is an excellent addition to your Halloween movie marathon.

Jonathan Hatfull

SciFiNow scored **8** for Tales Of Halloween
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

WARCRAFT Orc-ward

Details 12 // 130 mins // 2016 // Blu-ray • DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** Duncan Jones **Cast** Travis Fimmel, Toby Kebbell, Paula Patton, Ben Foster, Dominic Cooper **Distributor** Universal Pictures UK



The world of *Warcraft* is a hard place to navigate at the best of times, and even more so to turn into a feature-length movie. Unfortunately, the apparent difficulties radiate across via the viewing experience, as while there's a fair bit to like here, *Warcraft* ultimately proves to be a slog to get through.

Duncan Jones (*Moon*) does his best with the source material, crafting a convincing conflict that encompasses two sides with real motivations for fighting and their own turmoil to deal with. Inevitably, some characters are better sketched out than others: human warrior Anduin (Travis Fimmel) and Orc hybrid Garona (Paula Patton) stand out, while others like sorcerer Gul'dan (Daniel Wu) just seem evil for the sake of it.

There's clearly a healthy amount of fidelity for the source material here, but ultimately it comes at the expense of being fun. It's exposition-heavy to the point where it feels far longer than its 130-minute run time, and while there's clearly a good film in here somewhere, it's not necessarily in the right order, making it hard to find.

Steve Wright



SciFiNow scored **5** for Warcraft
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

TRIVIA DOMINIK HARTL HAD THE IDEA FOR THE PLOT OF *ATTACK OF THE LEDERHOSEN ZOMBIES* WHEN HE SAW DRUNKEN SKI TOURISTS ACTING LIKE THE UNDEAD.

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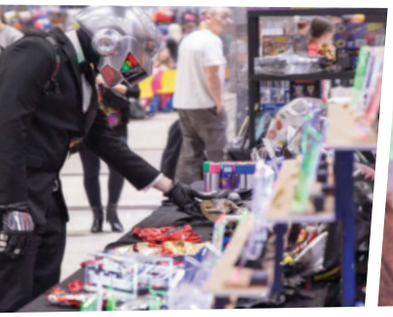
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VIRAL
The worms' turn

Details 15 // 85 mins // 2016 // DVD // **Released** Out now
Directors Henry Joost, Ariel Schulman **Cast** Sofia Black-D'Elia, Analeigh Tipton, Travis Tope, Michael Kelly **Distributor** Lionsgate Home Entertainment



The Blumhouse suburban horror formula gets a twist with this parasitic chiller from the directors of *Paranormal Activity 3* & *4* and *Catfish*. Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman stick fairly rigidly to the location rules as set out by the production company's flatpack manual, but the script by Barbara Marshall and veteran Christopher Landon does allow them to have a little more fun.

Emma (Sofia Black-D'Elia) and her older sister Stacey (Analeigh Tipton) have moved with their dad (Michael Kelly) to a small suburban neighbourhood, where he teaches science at their high school. Emma is struggling to fit in, but might have a chance at a connection with the boy next door (Travis Tope), and that infectious disease thing on the news is nothing to worry about. Right? Suddenly, Emma and Stacey are home alone under curfew as the contagion spreads and parasitic worms drive their human hosts to acts of brutal violence.

For most of its running time, *Viral* is a solid if unspectacular body horror. From the early frog dissection through to the evil black worms wriggling in and out of the ears of infected suburbans, there's an obvious pleasure taken in gross-out shocks. It's also clearly aimed at a young teen audience though, so don't get too excited, Cronenberg fans. The footage and images that are presented in biology class are more revolting than any of the actual effects that we're shown.





Black-D'Elia (*The Night Of*) is a sympathetic lead and handles the part of the responsible, slightly repressed 'good sister' well. Tipton, who's impressed in films like *Crazy Stupid Love* and *Warm Bodies*, gets to have much more fun as the irresponsible older sister, delivering an impressive physical performance, while *House Of Cards*' Michael Kelly is on hand to deliver the bulk of the early exposition.

While it's all very predictable, *Viral* is consistently watchable, with some strong set pieces, a couple of moments to make the skin crawl, and a very solid pair of lead performances. There are certainly worse ways to spend 90 minutes.

Jonathan Hatfull

5 SciFiNow scored **5** for Viral
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Right At Your Door
A man seals himself in his home after a dirty bomb goes off in LA, but what will he do when his wife returns?

DR STRANGE
Bad magic

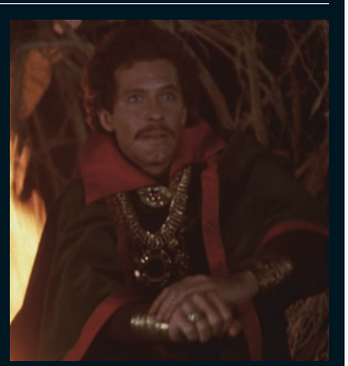
Details U // 89 mins // 1978 // DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** Philip DeGuere **Cast** Peter Hooten, Jessica Walter, John Mill **Distributor** Universal



It's easy to forget that Marvel films have been around for a while, with *Dr Strange* falling alongside the likes of *Generation X* and *Howard The Duck* in the 'totally random comic-book adaptations' category.

Having been resurrected by original rights holders Universal to tie in with Benedict Cumberbatch's take, it serves as an interesting enough slice of history, showing how superhero movies used to be made – namely by not structuring them as superhero movies. Indeed, this is very much a coming-of-age tale, with Stephen Strange (Peter Hooten) discovering his destiny as the Sorcerer Supreme, all the while pursued by the witch Morgan Le Fay (*Arrested Development*'s Jessica Walter).

Ultimately, despite the mostly competent performances, it can't hide the ravages of time. The effects are terrible even by the standards of its era, and its structure is unwieldy and unbalanced, with the bulk of the action haphazardly squeezed into the final third. One for obsessive Marvel completists, but no one else.



Steve Wright

4 SciFiNow scored **4** for Dr Strange
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE
A beautiful swansong

Details U // 103 mins // 2014 // Blu-ray • DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** Hiromasa Yonebayashi **Cast** Sara Takatsuki, Kasumi Arimura, Nanako Matsushima, Susumu Terajima **Distributor** Studiocanal



The fact that *When Marnie Was There* is the final film to be released by Studio Ghibli makes it essential viewing, but this quietly affecting ghost story is powerful enough on its own merits.

Based on the novel by Joan G Robinson, the story follows awkward outsider Anna (Sara Takatsuki, Hailee Steinfeld in the English dub), who goes to stay with relatives of her foster parents. While visiting a mansion on the other side of the marsh, she meets the bright, friendly Marnie (Kasumi Arimura/ Kiernan Shipka), who quickly becomes her only confidante. However, it soon becomes clear that Marnie is not from our time.

It's as beautiful as you'd expect from the studio, and director Hiromasa Yonebayashi does splendid work. Anna's plight is relatable, the relationships between the characters are wonderfully drawn, and the spell it casts is so delicate that you won't notice how invested you are until it moves you to tears.

Jonathan Hatfull



8 SciFiNow scored **8** for When Marnie Was There
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

TRIVIA *VIRAL* IS THE SECOND FILM BY DIRECTORS HENRY JOOST AND ARIEL SCHULMAN THIS YEAR. THEY ALSO DIRECTED *NERVE*.

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ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Time to stop

Details PG // 113 mins // 2016 // BD DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** James Bobin
Cast Mia Wasikowska, Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Anne Hathaway, Sacha Baron Cohen, Rhys Ifans **Distributor** Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment



Alice (Mia Wasikowska) never could stay away from Underland for long. But when she ventures back, she finds the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) on the brink of death, convinced that his family is actually still alive and needs saving. To help him, Alice must meddle with Time, which turns out to be a man in majestic robes and a big hat (Sacha Baron Cohen).

Director James Bobin does a solid job of continuing the franchise Tim Burton started in 2010, mirroring the tone and aesthetic while also creating his own. That being said, if you found the first *Alice* film difficult to care about, you're also going to struggle with this one.



Though Bobin takes it in a slightly different direction, it doesn't really offer anything new besides a couple of fun but forgettable characters that weren't there before.

Poppy-Jay Palmer

5 SciFiNow scored **5** for Alice Through The Looking Glass
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

GODS OF EGYPT

Don't trust in these gods

Details 12 // 127 mins // 2016 // BD DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** Alex Proyas
Cast Brenton Thwaites, Gerard Butler, Geoffrey Rush, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Elodie Yung **Distributor** Entertainment One



In Ancient Egypt, the future of mankind hangs in the balance when power-hungry god Set (Gerard Butler) steals his brother Horus' (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) eyes. To get them back and stop darkness from falling over Egypt, Horus sets off on a quest with Bek (Brenton Thwaites), a mortal thief.

Gods Of Egypt set itself up for bad vibes pre-production by casting mainly white people to play Egyptian Gods. Seriously, why are films still doing this? Are they unaware of how racist and counter-productive it is, or do they just not care?



But even without the overwhelming amount of whitewashing, it's still not great. The story is all over the place, the characters are very one-dimensional and the script never flies above 'mildly interesting'.

However, it has done something right: visually, *Gods Of Egypt* is marvellous. The film manages to bring the gods and their world to life in a way that makes you not want to miss anything, even if you don't really care about what's happening in the narrative.

Poppy-Jay Palmer

4 SciFiNow scored **4** for Gods Of Egypt
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

BURNT OFFERINGS

The house takes care of itself

Details 15 // 116 mins // 1976 // BD DVD // **Released** Out now **Director** Dan Curtis
Cast Oliver Reed, Karen Black, Bette Davis, Burgess Meredith, Eileen Heckart, Lee Montgomery **Distributor** Arrow Video



Dan Curtis' evil house movie seems to have been overlooked in the crowd of Amityvilles and the like (although it's worth noting that it pre-dates *The Amityville Horror*), but there's definitely an over-ripe Gothic charm to this adaptation of Robert Marasco's novel that's helped by its cast and production design.

Ben and Marion Rolf (Oliver Reed and Karen Black) get a bargain on a beautiful old house in the countryside, but there is a catch: they need to leave meals out for the elderly mother of the previous occupants, who they're assured they'll never see. The Rolfs move in with their son David (Lee Montgomery) and Ben's aunt Elizabeth (Bette Davis), and they all seem smitten with the place.

But the house seems to be having a strange effect on them. Ben is driven to acts of violence, while Marion begins dressing and behaving differently. And every time someone gets hurt, the house seems to shine a little brighter.

The opening is so aware of its own creepiness that Burgess Meredith is practically giggling at the audience through the screen, but once the Allardyce siblings are gone, the film settles into a leisurely pace. It's pretty slow in places, although the presence of screen legends like Reed, Black and Davis means that isn't too much of an issue.

Although it's heavily influenced by Robert Wise's *The Haunting*, with the revelation of the house as a living thing and plenty of terrifying noises, *Dark Shadows* veteran Curtis creates a suffocating atmosphere, and it packs a surprisingly nasty sting in its tail.

This Arrow restoration includes a commentary and three great interviews with Anthony James (the creepy driver), writer William F Nolan and Montgomery, the latter of whom remembers having his first taste of alcohol courtesy of Reed, and the confrontation between his movie father and real-life mother that followed.



It's slow-moving and more than a little hammy, but there really is something quite effective about *Burnt Offerings*, and fans of the genre should seek it out.

Jonathan Hatfull

7 SciFiNow scored **7** for Burnt Offerings
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Haunting
Robert Wise's film of Shirley Jackson's novel is a stone-cold masterpiece.





TRIVIA THE HOUSE IN *BURNT OFFERINGS* WOULD LATER BE USED AS THE FUNERAL PARLOUR IN *PHANTASM*.



Season One

LUKE CAGE

Harlem's finest

SciFiNow Must see now!

SHOW INFO

Released
Out now
Year Made
2016
Certificate
15
Creator
Cheo Hodari Coker
Cast
Mike Colter, Mahershala Ali, Alfre Woodard, Simone Missick, Theo Rossi, Rosario Dawson
Distributor
Netflix
Running Time
715 mins
Format
NETFLIX



Hot on the heels of two critical hits in *Daredevil* and *Jessica Jones*, *Luke Cage* has it all to do while striving to stand out from its predecessors. As it turns out, it could well be the pick of the bunch.

This may be a contentious statement, but for the first ten episodes at least, it's hard to really find fault with it. One recurring quibble with Marvel's Netflix output has been its tendency to hit the ground running, leaving relatively minimal plot to be spread across the second half before being reignited by a bold finale. Showrunner Cheo Hodari Coker has clearly been paying attention: pacing-wise, he's got it spot on, affording precious little space for filler.

The central premise is relatively simple: lying low in Harlem, still bearing his scars from the events of *Jessica Jones*, Cage (Mike Colter) finds himself drawn into a battle for the streets of Harlem thanks to the collateral damage of mob boss Cottonmouth (Mahershala Ali) and his cousin, scheming politico Mariah Dillard (Alfre Woodard)'s shady dealings landing too close to home to ignore. Before we know it, he's in full Power Man mode, punching people out and lobbing sofas out of windows for all to see.

Marvel's Netflix shows have worn their community pride on their jerseys, but even with this in mind, *Luke Cage* is unashamedly a far more homespun affair, with the streets of Harlem taking on a whole new life themselves, forming more than just a backdrop for the punch-ups, double-dealings and public-relation battles that characterise the show. This more intimate atmosphere filters down into the show's themes – in a world of police shootings and Black Lives Matter, *Luke Cage* is both of the moment and universal, scarily uncanny in its relevance.

Yet more than any other genre, *Luke Cage* brings its western influences to the fore, giving the form an update in the process. Cage is a sociable Man With No Name taking part in a solo *Magnificent Seven* – albeit in a world where he is sideswiped by the lack of moral absolutes. Colter is perfect – likeable and laid back, yet driven by a hunger for social justice, it's hard to imagine anyone else in the role.

His supporting cast are similarly committed. Having impressed in a number of film and TV roles, Ali's Cottonmouth is a highlight, wearing his chip prominently on his shoulder and delivering brutal revenge on anyone who points it out. It's a performance that should deliver him bigger roles, as is also the case with Woodard. Representing another side of the villainous coin to her on-screen relative, we don't want to mention too much of her storyline for fear of spoilers, but suffice to say, she'll get you talking.

Simone Missick's Misty Knight provides a welcome keyhole for us to view the previously unexplored (for Marvel, at least) inner workings of the police force through; Theo Rossi is similarly good value as brooding hitman 'Shades', and it's great to have Rosario Dawson back as Claire Temple, especially when she's delivering lines like the one knocking back Cage's attempt to invite her out for 'coffee'.

It's only in its ambition that *Luke Cage* occasionally fumbles. Intent on fleshing out the psychology driving more characters than just Cage, it can feel thinly spread, especially in the final stages. Add in the obtrusively silly final-episode smackdown, and it just serves as a timely reminder that it's a far better show when it's embracing its core themes rather than trying to be another superhero show.

Happily, it isn't just another superhero show; it's arguably the best one to date.

Steve Wright



EASTER EGGS AHOY!

Spotting the nods to the wider Marvel universe



The Battle of New York
Street vendors are seen attempting to sell bootleg copies of various events, from Hulk's battle with the Abomination to the Battle of New York.

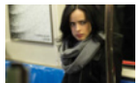
Hammer Tech
Many of Cottonmouth's weapons are obtained via the company owned by Justin Hammer (from *Iron Man 2*), as is the 'Judas bullet'.

Daredevil
Matt Murdock is indirectly mentioned frequently, with Claire Temple referring to "her lawyer friend".

Wilson Fisk
His presence is keenly felt, with it being mentioned how jumpy the city's criminal element is since the Kingpin got locked up.

SciFiNow scored **9** for
Luke Cage: Season One
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Jessica Jones
If for some reason you haven't seen it already, catch up with Cage's first small-screen appearance.

TRIVIA IN ADDITION TO *CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR*, ALFRE WOODARD ALSO STARRED IN THE ANIMATED *BLACK PANTHER* MOVIE IN 2010.



STAR WARS: REBELS
Darth times

Details PG // 600 mins // 2016 // Blu-ray • DVD • amazon // **Released** Out now **Creators** Dave Filoni, Simon Kinberg, Carrie Beck **Cast** Taylor Gray, Freddy Prinze Jr, Vanessa Marshall, Tiya Sircar, Steve Blum, Ashley Eckstein **Distributor** Walt Disney



If A New *Hope* was the mould for Season One of *Star Wars: Rebels*, then Season Two very much takes its cue from the early stages of *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The introduction of Darth Vader was teased in the Season One finale, and it isn't very long before he makes his presence known in two-part opener 'The Siege Of Lothal', casually swatting Kanan and Ezra aside in one of the most one-sided lightsaber battles seen in *Star Wars* canon, before decimating the Rebels in battle almost single-handedly, basically erasing their presence on Lothal and forcing them on the run.

The stakes raised, glimmers of light are provided by new additions: *The Clone Wars*' Ahsoka Tano is now a recurring cast member, veteran Clone Wars commander Rex joins the fray, and somehow-still-alive pirate Hondo Ohnaka pops up as light relief.

In among the kid-friendly theatrics, there are plenty of highlights: 'Blood Sisters' provides a welcome look at the previously underwritten Sabine's history with the Mandalorians; 'The Honorable Ones' returns to the back story of Zeb and Kallus's feud, with surprisingly affecting results, and 'Shroud Of Darkness' is an unexpected repository of excellence, sparingly handing out a few surprising revelations.



Other aspects fail to hit the mark in quite the same way. Some of the cameos feel unnecessary – Princess Leia's appearance in 'A Princess On Lothal' is notably forced – and the new Inquisitors fail to make much headway, especially when all we're really waiting for is a certain Sith Lord to come back.

And when he does, he doesn't disappoint. Finale 'Twilight Of The Apprentice' delivers the face-off we've all been waiting for, but not quite believed would actually happen, as Ahsoka and her fallen master do battle. Such is the occasion that even the return of Maul (Sam Witwer) feels like a footnote by comparison.

If you're not watching this then you're missing out – it's far more than just filler while you wait for the films. *Rebels* is quietly but confidently crafting its own unique take on a galaxy far, far away, and doing a great job in the process.

Steve Wright

SciFiNow scored **8** for Star Wars: Rebels - Season Two
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Star Wars: The Clone Wars
We'll keep recommending this until everyone in the galaxy has seen it.

WOLF CREEK
Killer on the road

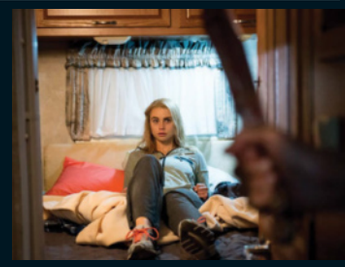
Details 18 // 292 mins // 2016 // DVD • Blu-ray // **Released** 26 September **Creator** Greg McLean **Cast** John Jarratt, Lucy Fry, Dustin Clare, Deborah Mailman, Jessica Tovey, Eddie Baroo, Rachel House **Distributor** Eureka Entertainment



Spinning Wolf Creek's cackling Outback serial killer Mick Taylor (John Jarratt) into a TV series might have seemed like a step too far for Greg McLean's nightmarish creation, but McLean and *Underbelly* veterans Peter Gawler and Felicity Packard take a step back from the high-octane thrills of the sequel, crafting a slow-burn thriller that retains the sly social commentary and gory shocks.

19-year-old Omaha native Eve Thorogood (Lucy Fry) is on holiday with her family when they come across Mick, who murders her mother, father and little brother before leaving her for dead. When she recovers, Eve decides to set out into the wilderness to track this monster down and stop him for good. But what's Mick going to do when he realises he's being followed?

The focus here is very much on Eve and her journey, while Mick pops up a few times every episode to brutally murder some unfortunate tourists. The series is beautifully shot, but paints a bleak picture. With the exception of Dustin Clare's good-hearted detective, the police are incapable of helping, while most of the Aussies that Eve comes across are violent, aggressive or, at best, disinterested. People who actually help her are few and far between.



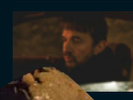
Fry (*11.22.63*) is compelling as Eve, driven enough to make mistakes, but smart enough to learn from them, and her growing strength makes her a convincing match for her foe. Jarratt's Mick is as scary and unpredictable as ever, and the series doesn't fall into the trap of giving him too much screen time. The revelations about his past come close to over-explaining him, but don't quite cross that line.

This is a gripping and chilling series that shows that *Wolf Creek* has always been cleverer and richer than it might seem, although strong stomachs are required.

Jonathan Hatfull

SciFiNow scored **8** for Wolf Creek
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Fargo
Noah Hawley's take on the Coens' classic isn't short on terrifying killers and dogged investigators.



TRIVIA DESPITE PLAYING AN AMERICAN IN *WOLF CREEK*, LUCY FRY IS AUSTRALIAN.



Season Two

DARK MATTER

Coming into the light

Details 15 // 585 mins // DVD // Out now **Creators** Joseph Mallozzi, Paul Mullie **Cast** Melissa O'Neil, Anthony Lemke, Zoie Palmer, Jodelle Ferland, Alex Mallari Jr, Roger Cross, Melanie Liburd **Distributor** Acorn



Dark Matter showed plenty of potential in its first season with its intriguing premise, likeable cast and gritty vibe. Yet, its similarity to *Firefly* and familiar dystopian backdrop left a sense that it needed to establish a more distinct identity. Season Two makes up for that by kicking everything up a notch. The result is an air of confidence that suggests the series could become a space opera classic in its own right.

The season starts with the Raza's crew of criminals in a maximum-security prison after being betrayed by one of their own. Their escape is inevitable, but before that, *Stargate* alumnus Mike Dopud makes a big impression in his all-too-limited role as a gang boss on the inside. Also, the writers waste no time in delivering one of the surprising deaths that they promised this season.

Once back on the Raza, all of the surviving original characters have even chances to grow as their personal stories are neatly interwoven with big-picture events that bind the group together. Meanwhile, British actress Melanie Liburd gets to kick plenty of arse as a new addition to the cast. It's a shame that her character, Nyx, doesn't speak with Liburd's English accent, but that isn't wasted, and Nyx's talents are tied to one of the season's many interesting subplots. Shaun Sipos' former surgeon,



Devon, is set up to be a complex character too, but that's undermined when he's seemingly forgotten about halfway through the season.

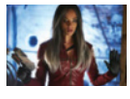
Again, this year the scripts toy with expectations by constantly teasing plot twists that aren't fully revealed until later. Meanwhile, a willingness to take bigger risks is suggested by the use of nerdier story devices that wouldn't be amiss in *Star Trek*. Even so, there's no shortage of gunplay to keep the show grounded. As a result, *Dark Matter* satisfies the baser instincts while appealing to the imagination: a winning combination that, if maintained, could secure the show an outstanding place in the history of sci-fi TV.

Michael Simpson

7 SciFiNow scored **7** for Dark Matter: Season Two

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Killjoys
Edgy, action-packed and with a butt-kicking British leading lady – what's not to like?

SciFiNow Must see now!



Season One

PREACHER

God's away on business

Details 18 // 600 mins // Blu-ray • DVD • amazon // Out now **Creators** Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg, Sam Catlin **Cast** Dominic Cooper, Joseph Gilgun, Ruth Negga, Lucy Griffiths, W Earl Brown, Anatol Yusef, Tom Brooke **Distributor** Sony Pictures Home Entertainment



It was reasonable to wonder how *Preacher* could possibly work on TV, but the answer from AMC's adaptation is "very well indeed". Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg and Sam Catlin took the mad, profane, globe-trotting bull by the horns and decided to root the story in one location: the hateful little Texas town of Annville.

For the uninitiated, *Preacher* is the story of padre Jesse Custer (Dominic Cooper), struggling with an uncaring congregation and a crisis of faith. The arrival of his pistol-packing ex, Tulip (Ruth Negga), and Irish vampire Cassidy (Joseph Gilgun) makes life complicated, but not as much as his being possessed by Genesis, a force from Heaven that makes people do whatever he says.

It deliberately takes its time, but while devotees may struggle with the pacing and the focus on Annville, their patience will be rewarded. This is an interpretation that makes some pretty big changes, but it's faithful to the spirit of the source material. It's brutally violent, hilarious and deeply weird, and God is not in the house.

It helps that the makers' casting instincts were dead-on. After an uncertain start, Cooper makes the role of Jesse his own, exploring the character's dark side with great skill. Negga nails Tulip's take-no-prisoners toughness, humour and hidden sensitivity. But it is Gilgun that steals the series with his stunning turn as Cassidy. He's given the bulk of the amazing slapstick violence set-pieces: the plane fight, the chainsaw in the church – he's a joy to watch.

Ignoring the occasional wobble, the final two episodes show just how bold and brilliant this series can be. With creative set pieces, shocking violence, harsh truths and brilliant performances, this is television at its absolute best.

Jonathan Hatfull



8 SciFiNow scored **8** for Preacher: Season One

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Misfits
For more Joseph Gilgun excellence, check out his performance as Rudy in E4's *Misfits*.

TRIVIA ENNIS ESMER RETURNS AS THE RUTHLESS MERCENARY WEXLER IN *DARK MATTER*, EVEN THOUGH HIS CHARACTER WAS SPACED IN SEASON ONE.

JUST A SCORE Download on the App Store
GIVE YOUR SCORES • FOLLOW OUR SCORES



Season 11

SUPERNATURAL

Don't you cry no more, seriously

Details 15 // 969 mins // Blu-ray • DVD // Out now **Creator** Eric Kripke **Cast** Jared Padalecki, Jenson Ackles, Misha Collins, Mark Sheppard, Emily Swallow, Ruth Connell, Rob Benedict **Distributor** Warner Home Video



There's barely a second to breathe between the end of Season Ten and the start of Season 11. The latter takes us right back into the Darkness, which turns out to be a woman named Amara (Emily Swallow).

Going by *Supernatural*'s usual standards for overarching plotlines (post-Season Three, at least), the Darkness is pretty average. An intimate quasi-relationship between Dean (Jensen Ackles) and Amara keeps things weird and interesting, but the story isn't quite complex or suspenseful enough to match up to some of the previous seasons.

Likewise, Amara is sinister as the Big Bad at times, but she's not as memorable as the likes of Azazel, Lilith or Lucifer. She's about as interesting as Abaddon and Dick Roman. Remember him? Yeah.

However, when we step away from the overarching sagas and get back to the crack episodes and the weeks where Sam (Jared Padalecki) and Dean are just driving around together solving mysteries, *Supernatural* is as good as it ever was. Season 11 brought us a handful of gems, including 'Plush', in which people are murdered by people dressed in mascot costumes that won't come off, and 'Just My Imagination', which starts with a little girl being traumatised for life when she discovers the slaughtered, glitter-covered corpse of her imaginary friend, Sparkle the Unicorn Man.

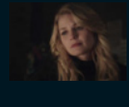
As far as Season 11 (and Ten, Nine, Eight and Seven) is concerned, you have to wade through the swamp to get to the treasure chest. Sometimes it's worth it, and sometimes it's not. It's all dependent on what you're still watching the show for.

It turns out that it's possible to both want *Supernatural* to just hurry up and end already, and also be the sort of fan who still gets a bit teary-eyed when 'Carry On Wayward Son' starts to play at the beginning of every season finale. Basically, we just want it to get really good again and then continue forever. We might like to talk shit about it, but we'll miss it when it finally calls it a day, whenever that may be.

Poppy-Jay Palmer

7 SciFiNow scored **7** for Supernatural: Season 11
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Once Upon A Time
A women travels to a small town called Storybrooke and finds that fairy tales seem to come to life.



Season Three

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Immaterial witnesses

Details 15 // 783 mins // DVD // Out now **Creators** Phillip Iscove, Alex Kurtzman, Robert Orci, Len Wiseman **Cast** Tom Mison, Nicole Beharie, Lyndie Greenwood, Nikki Reed, Shannyn Sossamon, Lance Gross **Distributor** 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment



At the start of this season, things don't look promising for *Sleepy Hollow* – the town or the show. Several heads have rolled off-screen since the second season finale in response to a ratings slump. Unfortunately, these include Orlando Jones' Captain Irving, one of the series' best characters, and most explicit nods to the source material.

New showrunner Clifton Campbell has ditched pretty much everything else that ties the show to its literary origins too, including the Headless Horseman. Given how formidable he was set up to be, his perfunctory exit early in this season's premiere is so insignificant that it feels like the writers couldn't get rid of him soon enough.

At first, his replacement, Pandora (Shannyn Sossamon), looks like a worthy successor with her creepy box of tricks. Yet, it's apparent after a few episodes that her vague plan has only slim links to Sleepy Hollow, and principally involves unleashing a series of familiar evils upon the town.



Unsurprisingly, Ichabod Crane (Tom Mison) and newly minted FBI Agent Abbie Mills (Nicole Beharie) have no trouble dispatching these network TV-friendly ghouls. Their successes don't feel sincere though, because they're almost always achieved through broad assumptions and Crane's seemingly limitless ability to suddenly recall past experiences with the supernatural.

Sleepy Hollow has been undermined by these flaws from the beginning, but the longer it's gone on, the more obvious they've become. The original short story is too flimsy to sustain a series that isn't fleshed out with complex characters and involved storylines. This season, Mison, Beharie and their co-stars are still an appealing gang of ghostbusters, but there's no real depth to their characters. Moreover, the formulaic monster-of-the week storylines don't amount to evolution, never mind the revolution the series needed.

With the season's climactic events forcing yet another reboot, it's hard to see *Sleepy Hollow* lasting much longer.

Michael Simpson

6 SciFiNow scored **6** for Sleepy Hollow Season Three
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Grimm
A lesson in making a daft premise believable using emotional depth and a cleverly crafted mythology.

1 TRIVIA EXPLAINING HIS DEPARTURE FROM *SLEEPY HOLLOW*, ORLANDO JONES REPORTEDLY SAID, "I WON'T COME BACK BECAUSE THEY KINDA ASKED ME TO LEAVE."

TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING









Available this October, on home video for the first time in the UK in a Dual Format edition.



Robert Aldrich's Twilight's Last Gleaming is a thunderous political thriller and race-against-time doomsday classic starring Burt Lancaster and Richard Widmark.

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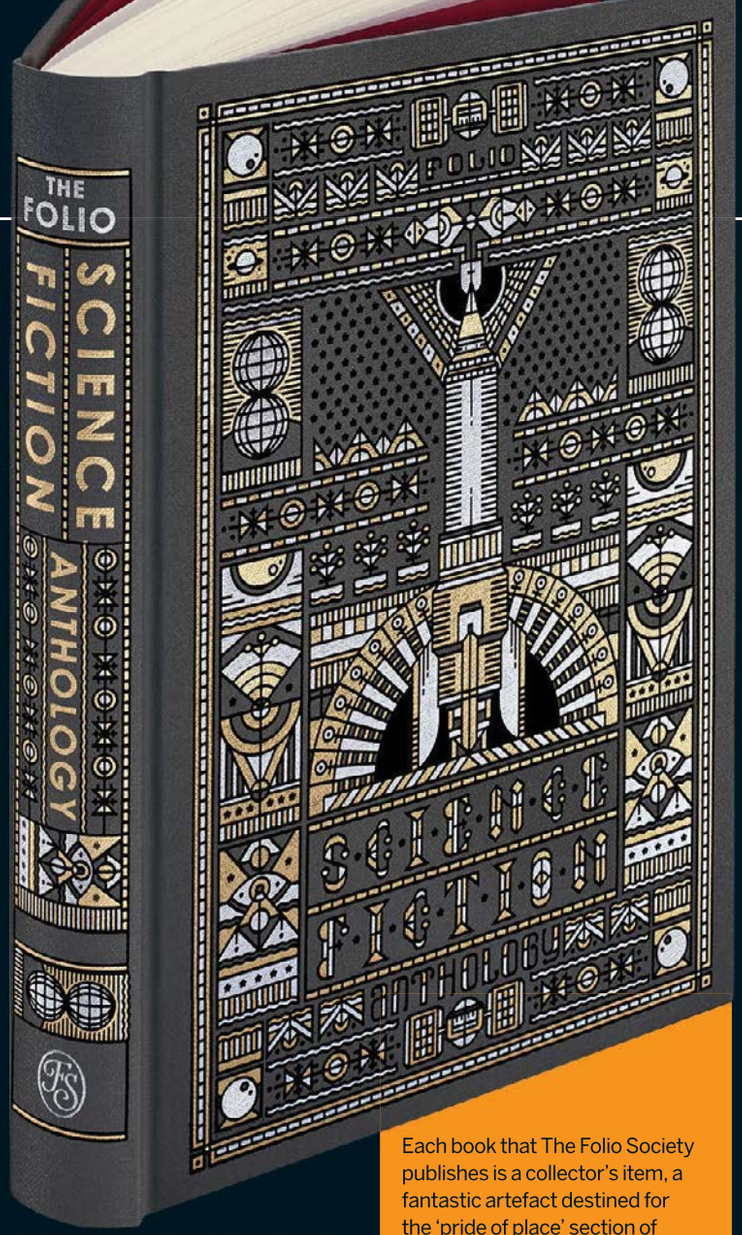
74 Haunted Houses

Read our guide to the most terrifying homes in SF

72 The Folio Society: Brian Aldiss 76 Book Reviews 82 Becky Chambers
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The Folio Science Fiction Anthology

Brian W. Aldiss introduces this exciting new anthology illustrated by Florian Schommer



As we are growing up, and hopefully growing in understanding, many of us become amazed by the conditions and contradictions we glimpse in life. Perhaps we attend church services while knowing full well there cannot be a further life for us after death. We may tell each other of our amazements; some of us turn such amazements, such questions, into music, others into paint. Or religion, or literature, or presumably boxing.

Our understandings influence the way we dress, what we eat, whom we marry. Our affluence, if we have any.

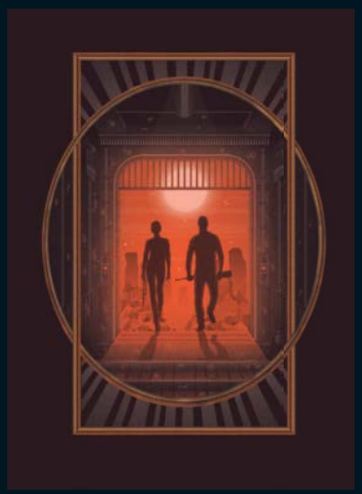
There is nothing very strange about the strangeness of what we call science fiction. Indeed, as decades slip by, it becomes more and more likely that one day – oh, that one day soon we shall be driving a type of car that flies, or that a form of diet may enable us all to live to the age of two hundred years, or that we shall travel to Mars and have a small palace or bungalow there.

Or we may be much mistaken and our careless and rather greedy ways could lead us to wars of greed and extinction. Themonkeys may take over. Or the sagacious wolf. But in these pages, speculation is more modest; this kind of story, known as science fiction, is based on the whole on what might happen soon, or has happened, or might with good or bad luck be happening now.

A university among the stars? A human landing on tantalising Pluto? The travels of *Gulliver*?

It cannot be helped if sometimes the writers of such speculative matters happen to get it wrong; they create within current frameworks of knowledge. There was a time when science fiction magazines carried stories of cities, often utopian, on the moon. Now that we have reached the Moon, we find there is nothing much we can do there, except stand, arms akimbo, and be photographed.

My naïve belief is that much SF is absolutely wonderful, expressing our



hopes and our fears. As Lucretius put it a while ago – although unfortunately not in the English language:

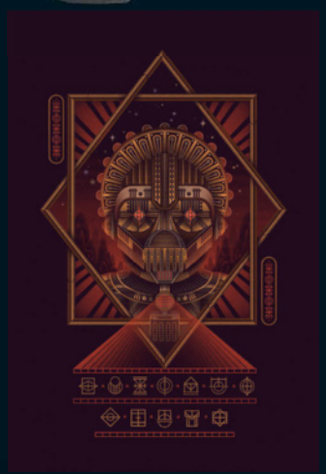
O wretched minds of men!
O hearts so blind!
How dark the life,
how great the perils are
In which whatever time is
given is passed!

Time was when Mr H. G. Wells ruled the waves. His long and exceptional day is over, as is the case of other conquerors such as Jules Verne. Even the related utopia seems to have undergone a similar eclipse. The utopianists – Edward Bellamy, William Morris and Aldous Huxley – have come and more or less gone. We are now living in a world befuddled by religions and psychotic versions of religion.

Popular SF found its refuge in the United States, and in SF magazines. Some years ago I was flying to the States; I showed my passport at the JFK check-in. Amazingly, the duty officer knew my name. 'Welcome in,' he said, 'we all read SF here.' It would never happen at Heathrow.

However, there are SF writers and readers in the UK as well. Some of whom we are happy to present here.

© BRIAN W. ALDISS, OBE





Each book that The Folio Society publishes is a collector's item, a fantastic artefact destined for the 'pride of place' section of any bookshelf, and their latest anthology is no different.

Legendary author Brian W. Aldiss, the writer of such seminal works as *Hothouse*, *Supertoys Last All Summer Long* and the *Helliconia* trilogy, edits and introduces *The Folio Society Science Fiction Anthology*. This wonderful collection – with seven full-page colour illustrations by multiple ADC award-winning artist Florian Schommer – includes works by giants like Philip K. Dick, Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Anna Kavan, H. G. Wells, Alice B. Wilson and even Voltaire, making it both an essential collector's item and an ideal entry point into the genre.

In this exclusive extract, Aldiss introduces this fine selection...

The Folio Science Fiction Anthology is exclusively available from The Folio Society (**www.foliosociety.com**), Illustrations by Florian Schommer.


ATTACK OF THE LEDERHOSEN ZOMBIES
THE HILLS ARE ALIVE...
OFFICIAL SELECTION
FRIGHTFEST
LONDON
2016
'One of the smartest, coolest and most original zombie comedies in years'
SCREAM HORROR MAGAZINE
'A thigh slapping Zom-Com that takes the piste'
HOUSE OF FREUDSTEIN
'Zombie comedy of the year'
TERRORWEEKEND
AVAILABLE FROM
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in-store | online
ATTACKOFTHELEDERHOSENZOMBIES.COM
DIGITAL, BLU-RAY & DVD 7TH NOVEMBER
SCREENBOUND



If someone dies an unnatural death, you can be sure they will linger...

Which sub-genre would you like to see tackled next?
Let us know on Twitter or Facebook

Classic time travel paradoxes to ponder

Buried secrets

Some houses may be born bad, but most of them go that way because of what happened inside them. Mostly this means murder, but it can also be an accident, great unhappiness or a secret shame that has leeched into the house itself.

Unreliable narrators

Generally, those with a fragile grip on their sanity don't tend to do well in haunted houses, their brains becoming a mirror for the building's insanity. Are they losing their mind, or is the house using their instability to push them to the edge? Normally, it's a bit of both.

Ambiguity

Following on from our previous point, a lot of the great haunted house stories like to leave the 'Was the house really haunted?' question open to interpretation. However, there are plenty that don't, from *The Shining* to *The Secret Of Crickley Hall*.

Unhappy endings

Sad to say, but stories about people staying in haunted houses don't tend to end well. There are happy exceptions, but generally speaking, someone has got to stay behind to become the house's latest permanent occupant. You've always been the caretaker here, Mr Torrance...

A Beginner's Guide To Haunted Houses

Some houses are just born bad... WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

The haunted house: where buried secrets and traumatic events linger still, rising to the surface to terrify the life out of the new tenant and the reader. The haunted house trope has been around for as long as the ghost story; the earliest works of Gothic fiction feature horrified young women roaming dark corridors in the middle of the night.

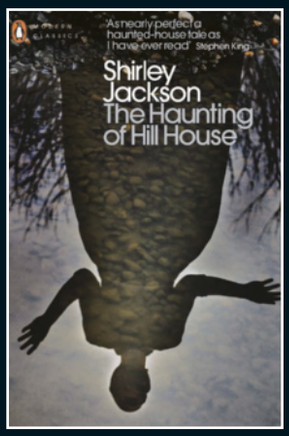
Here, we're looking at stories that place their settings front and centre. In a truly great haunted house novel, the building should be one of the – if not *the* – most important characters. It has absorbed the trauma and psychoses of those who have lived and died there, and is waiting to bleed into the fragile minds of characters like poor Nell Vance in *The Haunting Of Hill House*, or the unnamed governess in *The Turn Of The Screw*.

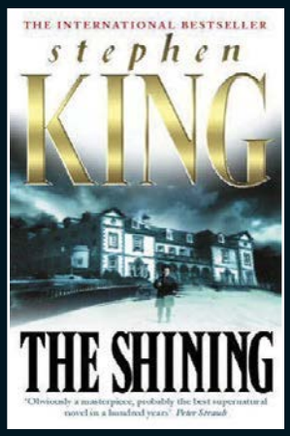
The haunted house was traditionally a Gothic mansion or castle, but as the centuries passed, the genre has moved with the times. A hotel has almost limitless potential, with rooms upon rooms of possible murder sites, as Stephen King showed us with *The Shining*'s Overlook, and some of the best horror films of recent memory have transplanted the tropes to apartment buildings, like *Dark Water*, or abandoned asylums like *Session 9*.

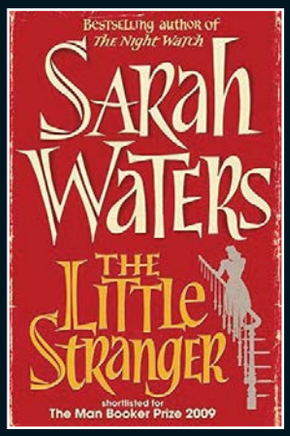
There's no better description of a haunted house than the one Shirley Jackson gave us: "No live organism can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality; even larks and katydids are supposed, by some, to dream. Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone."

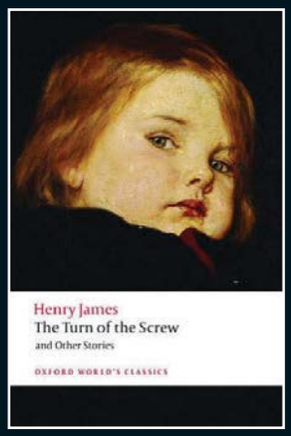


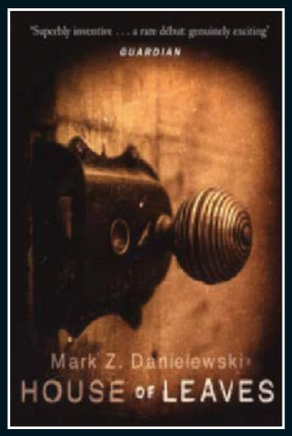
The Overlook Hotel knows Jack Torrance's weakness and exploits it.











It's a Mad House

The greatest of them all

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE
Author: Shirley Jackson
Publisher: Penguin Modern Classics
Published: 1959
Price: £9.99

Jackson's classic is the greatest haunted-house story ever written. Paranormal investigator/college professor Dr Montague invites a group to spend the weekend at the apparently haunted Hill House. Is fragile Nell awakening the spirit of Hugh Crane, or is she losing her mind? Her unreliable viewpoint lends troubling dimensions to expertly delivered chills, and the history of the house functions as a textbook for future authors.

"Really loved the character of Eleanor Vance and how creepily atmospheric the story was. #BookClub" **@Cascararogue**

Horror hotel

Welcome back, Mr Torrance

THE SHINING
Author: Stephen King
Publisher: Hodder Paperbacks
Published: 1970
Price: £8.99

King's novel is much richer than those who only know the film might expect. At its core it's the story of alcoholism and domestic abuse, as the haunted Overlook hotel awakens the worst parts of struggling writer Jack Torrance to get to his psychically gifted son, Danny, and there's a big beating heart beneath its spectral chills. It is also absolutely terrifying, from Room 217 to the hedge maze creatures and the black-hearted spectres pushing Jack to the brink of insanity.

"*The Shining* is the best example of placing an already troubled man in a haunted hotel and slowly racking up the pressure." **@Mabelspet**

To the manor born

Ghosts of fortunes past

THE LITTLE STRANGER
Author: Sarah Waters
Publisher: Virago
Published: 2009
Price: £8.99

Sarah Waters isn't best known for her horror fiction, but this Gothic chiller is absolutely fantastic. Set in the Forties, it finds country doctor Faraday attending to the tenants of Hundreds Hall. The Ayres family are on the verge of bankruptcy, but are keeping up appearances – until something happens that sets them all on edge. It's most definitely a ghost story, but Waters also uses her setting to put the crumbling post-war British upper class under the microscope. Scary, and sharp, too.

"Brilliant novel. A very human take on the supernatural. #BookClub" **@JonOliverEditor**

The innocents

What precocious children...

THE TURN OF THE SCREW
Author: Henry James
Publisher: Oxford World Classics
Published: 1898
Price: £6.99

You might know the superb film *The Innocents* better than its source material, but we urge you to read Henry James' novella. A young governess takes a job looking after two children in a country house, but their behaviour seems increasingly unusual. Could it be linked the death of her predecessor? James' tale is decidedly ambiguous, and there's no certainty that our protagonist is doing the right thing, leading to a chilling finale.

"Great book. It is the first real Gothic experience many students get! #bookclub" **@DanielSWos**

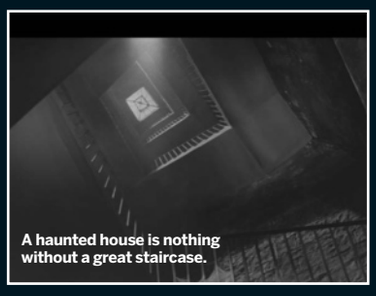
Phantom spaces

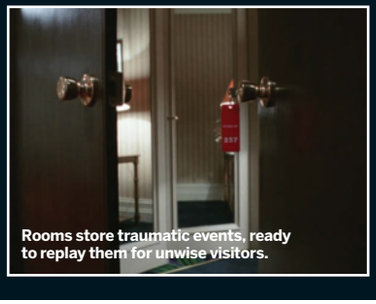
Bigger on the inside

HOUSE OF LEAVES
Author: Mark Z Danielewski
Publisher: Doubleday
Published: 2000
Price: £28

As much a wonderful artefact as it is brilliant work of horror fiction, we've included Danielewski's genre-bending tome as an example of how the haunted house formula can be twisted and played with. Johnny, our narrator who admits to being unreliable, finds a manuscript in the apartment of a dead man for a documentary about a family that moves into a house that's bigger on the inside, It's a meta horror romance, and quite brilliant.

"Intricate, ferociously clever & fascinating, but needed more attention to Truant's characterisation." **@GeorgeSandison**


A haunted house is nothing without a great staircase.


Rooms store traumatic events, ready to replay them for unwise visitors.


The Overlook was based on the real-life Stanley Hotel in Colorado.

Your Five Favourite Horror novels for non-horror fans

CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE @SCIFINOW ON TWITTER



1. The Last Days of Jack Sparks

"I'm not a huge horror fan but am really enjoying *The Last Days Of Jack Sparks* by @jasonarnopp. #BookClub"
@dedbutdrmng



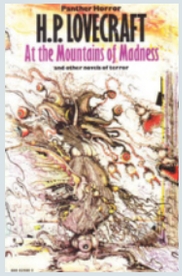
2. Let The Right One In

"*Let The Right One In* – John Ajvide Lindqvist. Beautiful horror story. #BookClub"
@AndyW Marsden



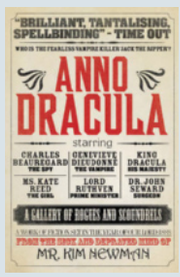
3. The Stand

"Start with Stephen King, *The Stand*, or *Carrie*. One with the more sympathetic characters before moving on to the rest."
@Mabelspet



4. At The Moment Of Madness

"...By Lovecraft. It's slow burning enough as to not put them off right away. #BookClub"
@FilmLand Empire



5. Anno Dracula

"*Anno Dracula* by Kim Newman. Not even sure it counts as horror, it's so character based. Plus the classics, *Dracula* & *Frankenstein*."
@cai_boxer

Details **Author:** Paul Tremblay **Publisher:** Titan **Price:** £7.99 **Released:** Out now

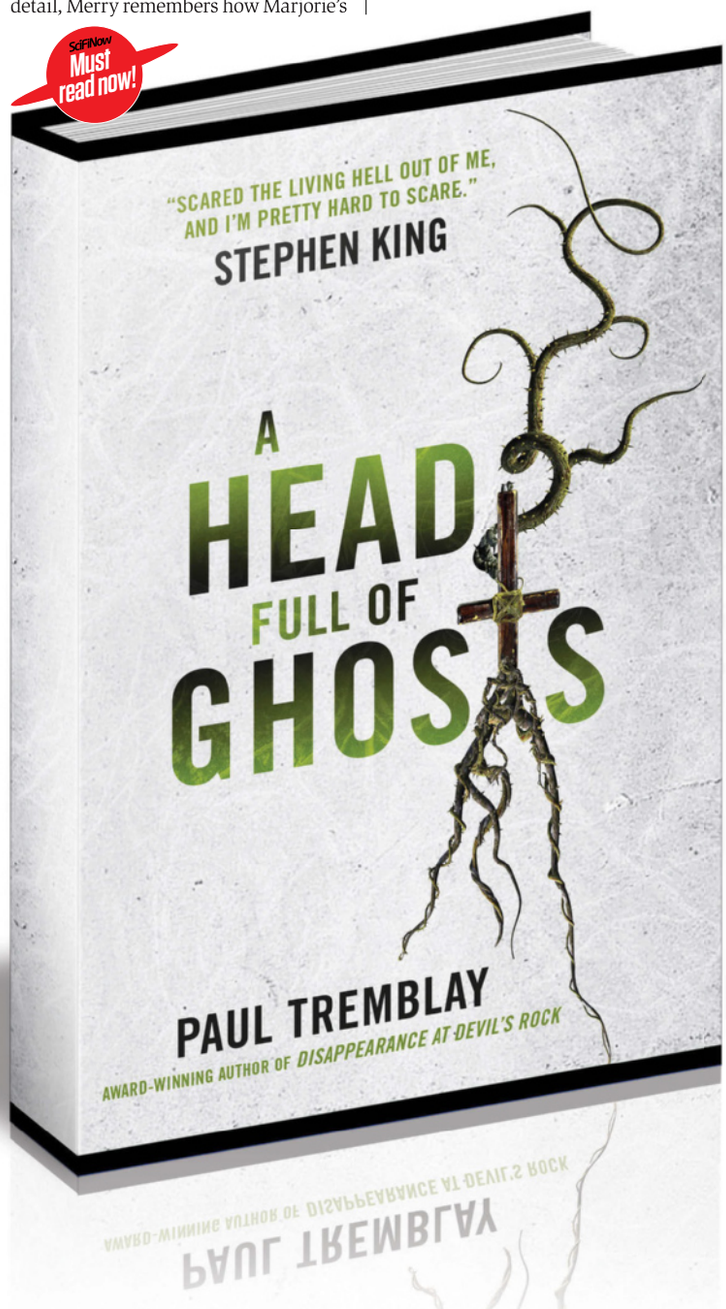
A HEAD FULL OF GHOSTS

Satanic panic

You may have heard of Paul Tremblay's latest horror novel, as it won the Bram Stoker Award last year, but it's finally been released here in the UK, and it is absolutely worth the wait. Terrifying, intelligent and surprisingly affecting, this is horror to shout about.

Things get off to very meta start, as Meredith 'Merry' Barrett agrees to regale her story to an author for a tell-all book. Her tale is already famous: the subject of a reality TV show based on the apparent possession and subsequent exorcism of her older, then-teenage, sister Marjorie. While a horror blog breaks down the show in intricate detail, Merry remembers how Marjorie's psychological issues grew worse and worse. But what was fact, and what was fiction? As Merry's story moves towards the show's grand finale, we start to uncover the tragic truth.

Tremblay definitely knows the audience that he's writing for, and exactly how genre-literate they are. So while there are explicit references to possession movies from *Evil Dead* to *The Exorcism Of Emily Rose*, there are also subtle nods to classics like Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived In The Castle*. That book, with its unreliable narrator and dark secrets, is obviously a very important influence here.



Ambiguity is key from the outset, and it's not even clear whether Merry herself knows the truth.

The introduction to a cash-strapped family on the edge of breakdown might seem familiar (short-tempered dad, over-worked mum, moody teen and precocious child), but Tremblay makes each of these characters ring true, and wastes no time introducing the horror. A very early sequence in which Marjorie tells Merry the story of the Boston molasses incident using Richard Scarry characters is genuinely creepy, as is the doom-laden tale that follows, which she urges her sister to remember.

Each of Marjorie's subsequent outbursts are gripping and horrifying, even as the blog notes their similarities to moments from *The Exorcist*. This first section, before the media circus arrives, is the most scary, but that's not to imply that what follows is any less effective.

With the arrival of Father Wanderly and the TV crew, we see how control has been totally lost. Dad flits between evangelical fervour, rage and exhaustion, Mom is horrified by what she's allowing to happen, but too run down to realise that it's not too late to stop it, and Marjorie doesn't get better.

Her father goes on and on about how doctors haven't helped, but Wanderly's eagerness to diagnose Marjorie's illness as being diabolical in nature is skin-crawling. Meanwhile, at the epicentre is a 14-year-old who may be inconsistent in what she's telling her little sister, but most definitely needs help.

Tremblay drops hints about where the story is going in the final third, each one of them landing like a bombshell, and Merry's narration is a constant reminder of the impact this terrible event has had on this young woman.

It's aware of how clever it is, but that in no way lessens the novel's impact. With tricks up its sleeve until the very end, this is a fantastic horror story that we can't recommend highly enough.
Jonathan Hatfull

9 SciFiNow scored **9** for A Head Full of Ghosts
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
We Have Always Lived In The Castle
Shirley Jackson
The story of the Blackwood family is delightfully creepy, and Merricat is an unforgettable creation.

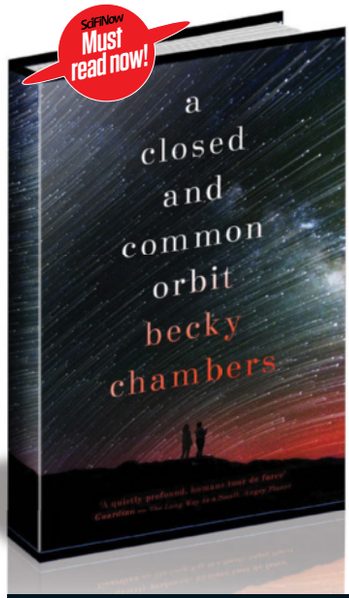
Details **Author:** Becky Chambers **Publisher:** Hodder & Stoughton **Price:** £14.99 **Released:** Out now

A CLOSED AND COMMON ORBIT

No body home

Becky Chambers follows her brilliant sci-fi adventure *The Long Way To A Small Angry Planet* with a story that's markedly different in some ways, but very much of the same spirit.

Rather than tell another story about the crew of the Wayfarer, Chambers' semi-sequel focuses on the journey of the ship's AI Lovelace, who was transplanted into an artificial, human-shaped body in a highly illegal procedure at the end of the last novel. Tech expert Pepper takes her in, giving her somewhere to live and work. But Sidra (the name she chooses for herself) struggles to adjust to her new physical state and lack of purpose, and constantly feels like she doesn't fit in. Can she find a way to live with this, or has she made a terrible mistake?



> "THE NOVEL IS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH THE PEOPLE AT THE STORY'S CORE"

Those expecting something exactly like *TLWTASMAP* may be a little surprised, and the more deliberate pacing may take a little getting used to, but Chambers' bold choice to focus so intently on just two characters works beautifully. The chapters are divided between Sidra's present and Pepper's childhood as a genetically engineered child labourer, in which we see exactly why she is so willing and able to help this AI consciousness find her way.

The literally grounded story doesn't stop Chambers from portraying a rich and vibrant universe; the level of detail that she brings to the technology and robotics is truly impressive. However, like her previous novel, *A Closed And Common Orbit* is principally concerned with the people at the story's core. The journey of these two women who have survived the lives that were chosen for them and are now living their own is portrayed with an honesty and warmth that is hugely affecting.

Jonathan Hatfull

SciFiNow scored **9** for A Closed And Common Orbit
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

All The Birds In The Sky
Charlie Jane Anders
Childhood friends who grow up to be a witch and a scientist clash over the end of the world in this wonderful debut.

Details **Author:** Stephen Lloyd Jones **Publisher:** Headline **Price:** £8.99 **Released:** Out now

THE DISCIPLE

It follows

Somewhere deep below the Earth, humanity's fate is being decided. An arcane pact, dictates our perception of reality, but something has changed. According to Gaelic mythology a chosen one is about to destroy life as we know it.

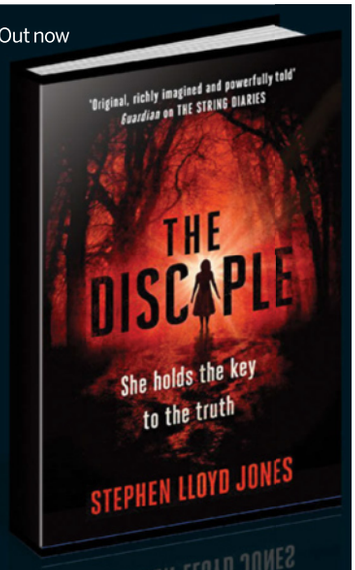
The author's third novel begins with one impossible event and escalates from there. When Edward Schwinn pulls a pregnant woman from the wreckage of a mysterious military-style vehicle, he doesn't know he'll end up taking responsibility for her child – and he definitely doesn't know how important that child will be.

He also doesn't know that the crash site he stumbled across is just one part of a greater massacre, and that ancient forces are massing against him and the baby. Jones's novel spans 16 years and several countries, its hefty 532 pages playing host to all manner of bizarre characters, from misanthropic farmers to conniving televangelists. It's practically an epic, but all that ambition means it sometimes feels a bit bloated.

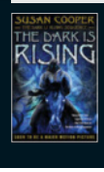
There are half a dozen characters who drop in and out of the story quite pointlessly, and Jones's prose is a bit overworked; the first few chapters are especially hard going, with entire paragraphs spent describing events as banal a man reaching for a door handle.

When it all kicks off though, it's worth the effort. *The Disciple* is at its best when it's dealing in quieter moments between its main characters; then, it becomes a story about love, and sacrifice, and how far a father will go to protect his child. The final pages are both chilling and inspiring, as the world shifts and wonder floods in.

Sarah Dobbs



SciFiNow scored **7** for The Disciple
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

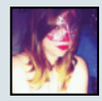


IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Dark Is Rising
Susan Cooper
Inspired by Celtic myths, Cooper's novel sees another child battling the forces of darkness.

YOUR READS

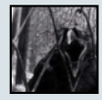
What you lot have been reading this month



"Nearly finished *Rig* by @Jon_Wallace what a great way to end a trilogy. #BookClub" **@Cascararogue**



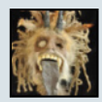
"Getting into *The Sleepless* from horror great @GrahamMasterton – unusually large and different chilling tale." **@ParsonsFiction**



"Just about to start *The Peshawar Lancers* by SM Stirling. I'm told it's military steampunk. Looks like fun anyway #bookclub" **@TheCorvidArcher**



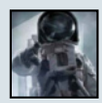
"Star Trek Creator - brilliant biography of the Great Bird; 'Altered Carbon' #BookClub" **@wordsrmagic2me**



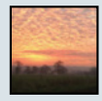
"*Snowcrash*, so far so good and doubt I'll be disappointed. #BookClub" **@jujustick**

7th

"*The Red Rising* trilogy by Pierce Brown. Excellent sci-fi series about classism, identity, frienship, family + war. #bookclub" **@The7thMatrix**



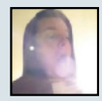
"*Necronomicon: The Best Weird Tales Of HP Lovecraft*, always enjoy revisiting these wonderfully creepy & atmospheric tales #bookclub **@paul_bowler**



"Currently reading *Wayward* by @blakecrouch1 book two of the trilogy very good so far. #BookClub" **@philbooty**



"*Children Of Time* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, so long as you aren't afraid of metre long spiders, excellent read. #BookClub" **@WoggieDoug**



"*The Last Days Of Jack Sparks*. Funny, fast and a little creepy! Good fun." **@HamSpanner**

Tell us **what you're reading** on Twitter or Facebook

60 SECONDS WITH



ROBERT BROCKWAY

What can you tell us about where we find Carey and Kaitlyn in *The Empty Ones*?
Literally: We find Carey in the punk scene of 1978, London, and Kaitlyn in Tucson, Arizona, modern day. Metaphorically: Carey is in a darker place than he was for most of the first book. He had the invincibility that only idiocy and youth can bestow, but when people started dying, some of the fun went with them. He knows the stakes now, and he's taking things a bit more seriously.

Kaitlyn, in her own way, is doing the same. It was never fun for her, fighting these monsters and risking her life, but she was still hoping it wasn't real, or that somebody would come along and help. Now, she realises the only person who can help her is... herself. It's a disheartening thought, but it's a truth she has to embrace.

How easy was it to get back into the heads of these two characters?
Due to the nature of selling the trilogy all at once – and the aggressive release schedule – I never got out of their heads. I finished book one, took a few days off, and went into book two. Same for book three. I've spent years in this weird place. I moved all my stuff in here. It's pretty cosy now.

Is finding the balance of horror and humour a tricky thing to do, or did it kind of come naturally?
It comes somewhat naturally for me, because I think horror and comedy share a lot in common. It's all in timing and defying expectations. The difference is only in the execution: A lot of setups can end equally well with both a jump scare and a punch line.



The Empty Ones by Robert Brockway is available to buy now, published by Titan Books.

Details **Author:** Daniel Polansky **Publisher:** Hodderscape **Price:** £18.99 **Released:** Out now

A CITY DREAMING

Magical metropolis

Daniel Polansky's latest novel follows M, a wizard living in a New York where reality can be influenced by the power of thought and other worlds can be accessed on the F train. He works as a kind of magical oddjob man, helping out his motley group of friends and to keep the uneasy truce that exists between the Red Queen, Abilene, and the White Queen, Celise.

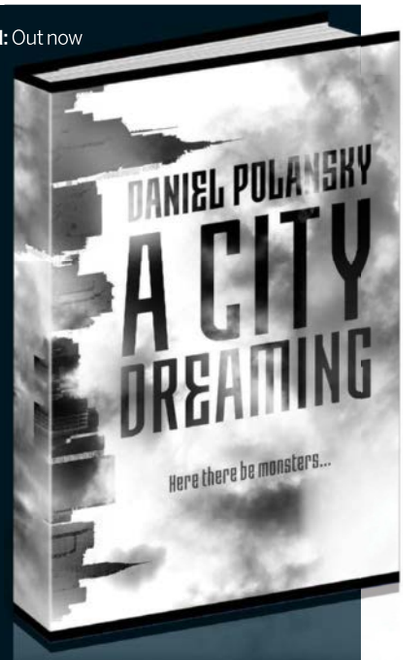
Rather than conventionally plot-driven, Polansky writes M's story as a series of vignettes, recounting various tasks or situations that M finds himself in. There isn't much hand-holding here. Sometimes characters explain a rule behind this constantly shifting world, but largely Polansky would rather let the reader figure it out. Sometimes this is successful, but at others it can render the world confusing to navigate.

The unusual structure allows Polansky to hop genres with ease. One task feels like a horror tale, and another a fantasy quest, which in turn adds an element of surprise for the reader; you're never quite sure where M will end up next. The structure also produces a sense of unevenness throughout. Pacing can vary across stories, and some tales – particularly in M's way of getting out of sticky situations – start feeling repetitive.

However, when a chapter does spark, Polansky's wit and enthusiasm is infectious, often producing some big laughs. There's a riotously entertaining encounter with pirates on the Gowanus canal, for example, and there are a few more chapters when Polansky hits those giddy heights again.

Like the book itself, the reading experience of *A City Dreaming* is a mixed bag. It can be maddening, but when it is at its most bold and innovative, it is a reality-bending journey through New York that is definitely worth taking.

Becky Lea



6 SciFiNow scored **6** for A City Dreaming
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



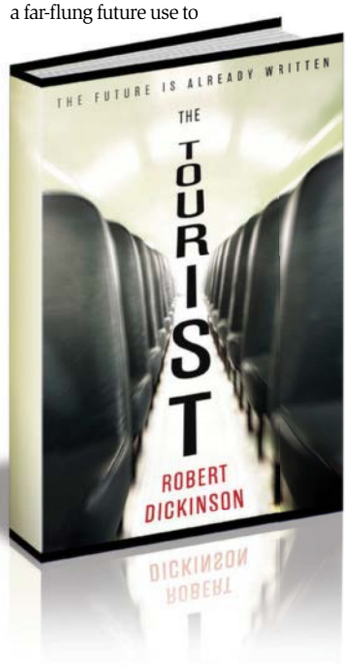
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Invisible Library
Genevieve Cogman
Bibliophilic espionage, magical derring do, and multiple realities via a magnificent library.

Details **Author:** Robert Dickinson **Publisher:** Orbit **Price:** £12.99 **Released:** 20 October

THE TOURIST

There and back again

New inventions inspire wonder, at least up until the point where they become commodities. In Robert Dickinson's *The Tourist*, this even extends to time travel, which people from a far-flung future use to return to the 21st century, eager to sample the delights of a bygone age.



As with any industry, what is leisure for some is merely business to those tasked with making sure that everything goes smoothly, which is where we find our protagonist 'Tunnel Boy', as one of those tasked with making sure the time-travelling sightseers don't wonder off and cause an incident – a task made easier by the foreknowledge of the past making people aware of any such events. So when somebody does go missing, things take a turn for the topsy-turvy.

The Tourist draws its inspiration from various areas of classic science fiction – from the constant references to a far-off NEE (Near Extinction Event) evoking Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys*, to the future numbered cities (governed by departments like Happiness, Safety and Awareness) not-so-subtly reflecting George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty Four* – and initially at least, it's greater than the sum of its parts. The story is slowly but surely teased out, intermittently dropping little details while advancing the plot at a breathtaking pace. The first two thirds are among the most gripping we've read of any sci-fi fiction this year.

Unfortunately, as in most time-bending literature, the final third grinds to a halt, building out to a peak before fizzling out. All the characters remain so enigmatic and the future similarly unknowable that it's hard to really invest anything in the emotional well-being of the leads, or be gripped by their potential fates. It doesn't so much end as stop.

If it had carried on as it had begun, it would be a nine. As it is, it falls short.

Steve Wright

7 SciFiNow scored **7** for The Tourist
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The First Fifteen Lives Of Harry August
Claire North
Another roundabout trip through time – only this time it lasts the distance.

Elsewhen Press

Independent publisher of Speculative Fiction

Out now! The explosive conclusion to the Blueprint Trilogy

In a future where personal relationships are forbidden, conformity is enforced through fear. But is life any better for those who escape the Citidomes?

"It reminds me of *1984* and *Brave New World*" – BFS

"If you've enjoyed reading *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* trilogies, you'll most likely enjoy this very much" – RisingShadow

"Logan's Run for *The Hunger Games* generation "

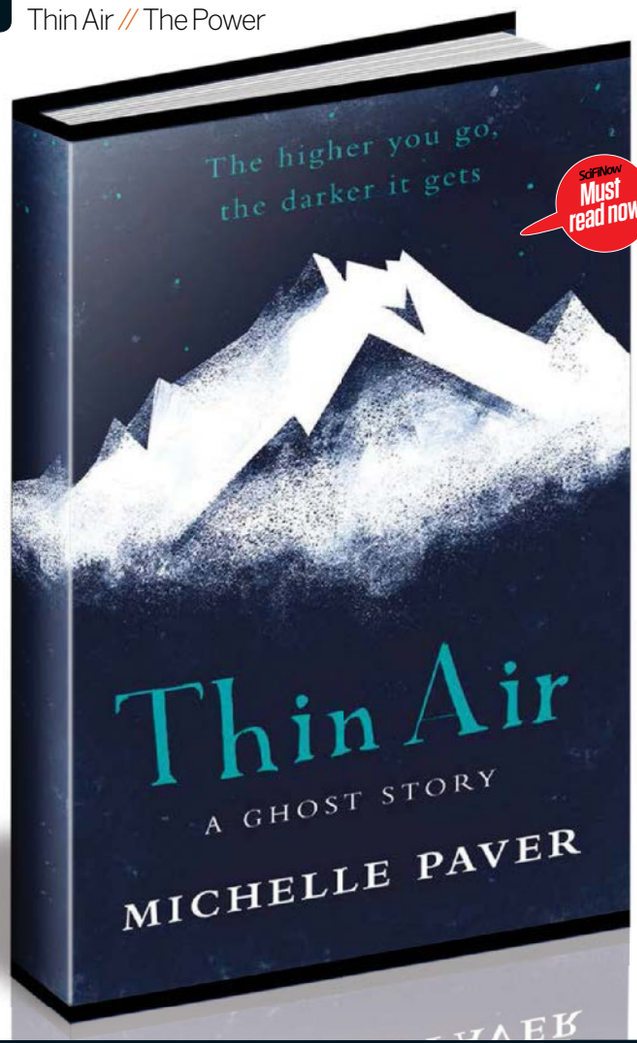


Future Perfect and Forbidden Alliance available in paperback online and from good bookshops

Freedom's Prisoners available in paperback in November

All available now in eBook formats Kindle, iTunes, Kobo, Google Play

bit.ly/BlueprintTrilogy



SciFiNow Must read now!

Author: Michelle Paver **Publisher:** Orion **Price:** £12.99 **Released:** Out now

THIN AIR

Coming up for air

Michelle Paver writes about ghastly goings on in on a trek to Mount Kangchenjunga with dextrous flair, flipping between thrilling descriptions of traversing glacial landscapes and chilling revelations of tormented souls.

In 1935, a group of Englishmen set off to follow in the footsteps of an expedition that ended in the tragic loss of the majority of its men. Edward Lyell, the victor who reached the summit back in 1907, is brilliantly tapped to depict the arrogance and ignorance of the British Empire during colonial rule in India. His bestselling account of his perilous outing serves as an inspiration to narrator Dr Stephen Pearce and his brother Kits.

As Stephen continues, his attitude towards Lyell changes, and as he re-reads his words as a grown-up, the more pompous and misguided his mission sounds. Stephen is also dealing with a recent break-up that saw him leave his partner weeks before marriage and a strained relationship with his older brother, which cunningly leaves you questioning his state of mind.

In 2014, Paver herself went up Kangchenjunga, and it shows. She uses the effects of altitude sickness and the power of suggestion to conjure up spooky and vicious supernatural presences. As the narrator see-saws between delirious and rational thoughts, a woozy and unsettling ambience creeps in.

Paver's elegantly crafted ghost story holds you in a vice-tight grip until the end as it journeys through years of guilt and despair at the cruel hand of man with nuance and intellect. *Thin Air* is an edge-of-your-seat reading experience that will leave you frosty-fingered and shivering as you hurriedly leaf through its pages to reach its startling climax.

Katherine McLaughlin

8 SciFiNow scored **8** for Thin Air
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Little Stranger
Sarah Waters
Waters picks apart the class system of Forties England in a ghost story set in a dilapidated mansion.

Author: Naomi Alderman **Publisher:** Viking **Price:** £16.99 **Released:** 27 October

THE POWER

The Power is coming...

Teenage girls all over the word begin to develop a strange new power that allows them to discharge electricity through their palms. This phenomena can be passed from woman to woman with one touch. The spark to ignite revolution is literally in their hands.

The story follows the lives of Margot; her frightened daughter Jos; Allie, transforming into the Prophet, Mother Eve; Roxy the daughter of a London gangster, and Tunde, a lone man searching for a story.

Alderman was mentored by Margaret Atwood, and her influence is evident. As the world within the pages descends further into disorder, the attempts of the characters to maintain and accept everyday life increases. This book is not only a gripping yarn about people with powers and the responsibilities attached to that; it delves deeper into recognisable struggles, from bullying to nuclear war.

Strangely, the best thing about *The Power* is its predictability. As each segment unfurls, you begin to see just how terribly wrong things are about to go. Each character stumbles on, convinced that each action is for the greater good, blind to how unfixable the chaos has become. The more warped their sense of perception gets, the more drawn in we become.

The heroes' journeys become progressively darker. Men and women turn on each other with harrowing consequences, which Alderman doesn't shy away from describing.

It is a great blend of reality and fantasy; exploring how a slight shift in power can hatch a dystopic world.

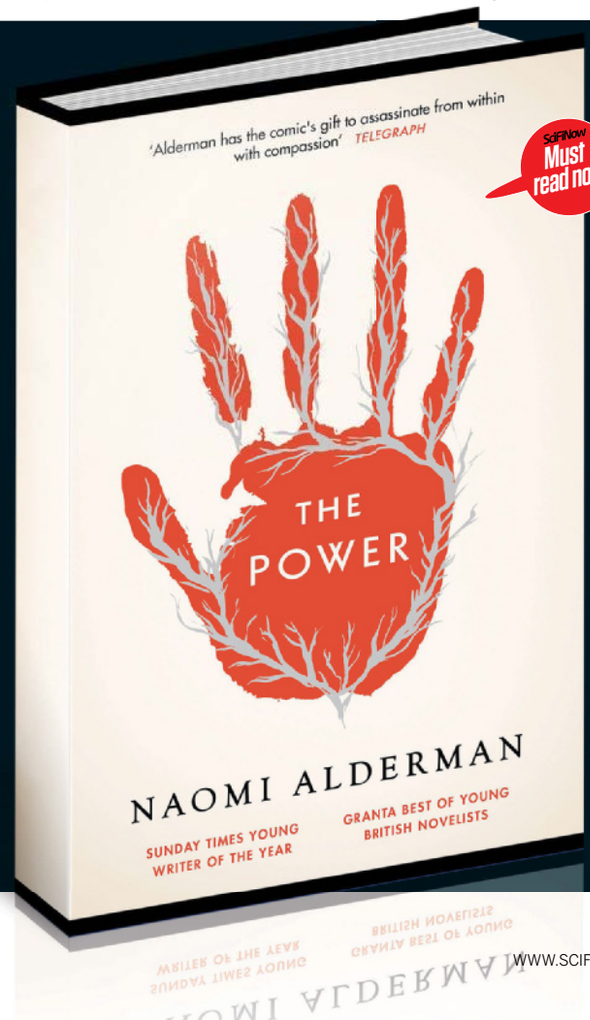
Amy Martin

9 SciFiNow scored **9** for The Power
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Station Eleven
Emily St John Mandel
20 years after the world is ravaged by disease, a young woman performs Shakespeare to the new world.



SciFiNow Must read now!

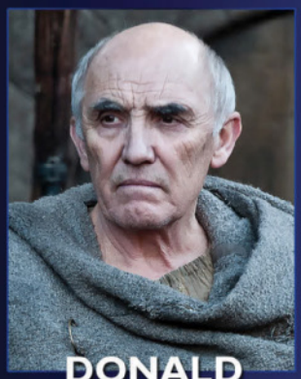
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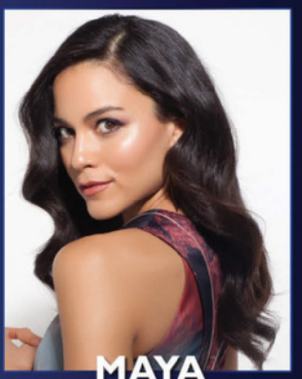
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WORDS **JONATHAN HATFULL**

THE BODY ELECTRIC

Author Becky Chambers tells us about her new novel, A Closed And Common Orbit, and why she likes to take her characters on emotional journeys

Becky Chambers jumped onto our 'must-read' list last year with her Kickstarter-funded debut *The Long Way To A Small, Angry Planet*. The warm-hearted and progressive blast of deep-space sci-fi was self-published in 2014, before being picked up by major publishers and re-released as one of the breakout novels of 2015.

"When I first self-published it, it was just like, 'Oh, Okay! I broke even! And that's good, and I will take that as a win,'" laughs Chambers. "So everything that's happened has just been so much more than I could have hoped for."

Now, Chambers is back with a second book in the same universe: *A Closed And Common Orbit*. It follows Lovelace, the ship's AI, who was downloaded into a human-ish body at the end of the last novel, and Pepper, the genius mechanic who has a difficult past of her own. As Sidra (as Lovey is now called) struggles to get to grips with her new form, we learn more about Pepper's past, and the similarities that these two women share.

Had you always anticipated writing a second Wayfarers book?

I didn't have any concrete plans for future novels, but I knew it was somewhere I could continue to explore. I definitely left that door open for myself. When my publisher asked, "Do you have a sequel in mind?" I didn't have anything further for the crew of the Wayfarer. If another story with them comes to mind in the future I'll write it, but I wasn't going to force it.

I was like, "Well, I don't have anything for this crew, but Pepper and Lovelace, those two have got stuff that I'd like to explore."

How did you settle on pairing these two characters?

It really did happen by accident. A lot of the stuff that happened in *The Long Way To A Small, Angry Planet* I'd scribbled down and imagined well before I actually sat down and wrote the thing, but I was well through the first draft before I knew where Lovelace was going to go after the first book, and somehow Pepper just naturally took that spot.

It was one of those wonderful moments where something happens when you're writing that you didn't intend, and it's just, "Oh that actually works really well!" Even though these two women have vastly different backgrounds and life experiences, they actually have quite a bit in common. It was fun finding the similarities between two characters that at first blush don't look like they could have anything similar at all, and yet are walking such similar paths.

Were there any specific influences on Sidra's journey?

I was thinking a lot about the portrayal of AI in science fiction. A body tends to be the be all, end all, and lot of AI that you see now are female artificial intelligences who are seen through the eyes of predominantly male characters, and I think that's a very different story than an AI trying to figure herself out. I kind of wanted to flip that around and give her some ownership there.

> "THE SCIENCE FICTION THAT I LOVE BEST REALLY DIGS DEEP INTO WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE US"
> BECKY CHAMBERS

There is definitely a strong element of fear and horror in a lot of AI stories as well, which ties into this weird idea – especially because they're female characters – of, "Oh, they're gaining control over themselves, and we're afraid of that." That's an element I definitely wanted to avoid! Sidra's not a threat, she's not going to glitch out and kill the crew; it's really about how we define personhood and what makes an entity an individual, what makes the rest of us consider them to be worthy of the same respect that we give each other. [That is what] I wanted to work with – I wanted to avoid the 'Scary robot episode'.

Although there are obviously some dark, oppressive forces in the novels, there's not really a villain in them. Was that intentional?

I'm drawn to stories in which there isn't a villain. I do like villains in some things, but I find it compelling when you don't have the 'bad guys'. There are people in this book who we know have created these social systems that the main characters are struggling with, but they don't actually meet these people. It's more of a struggle against society than a struggle against other characters, and I tend to think that's something more relatable.

Very few of us actually have a nemesis! Most of us are just struggling against social constructs, and we never get to see the faces behind those constructs, often because those things have been built over a long period of time; it's this thing that we've sort of accidentally built. So that's the struggle I want these two to be focusing on – not so much a person, but a societal reality.

Do you feel like you are drawn to stories that are instead more focused on emotional and psychological journeys?

I think there's room for all sorts of stories, and I definitely love things that are very different than the things I write, but the science fiction that I love best really digs deep into what it means to be human and what it means to be us. What makes us special? What makes us stand out in this universe in which we are so very small? Typically, I gravitate a little stronger towards science fiction that favours exploration over fear, so I don't find it a surprise that that's what I tend towards in my own work as well.

I had a very smart teacher who handed me *The Left Hand Of Darkness* when I was 15 and said, "I think you'll really like this", and Ursula Le Guin remains my be-all, end-all author. Reading her stuff was the watershed moment for me where I really understood what science fiction could be. What it was at its best, what it had the power to do. I don't pretend that my work is anywhere near that level, but it is what made me want to write, reading her stuff.

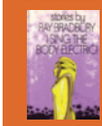
A Closed And Common Orbit by Becky Chambers is available on 20 October, published by Hodder & Stoughton.

Good Robot

Celebrating the computers who don't want to kill us for our skin



Lovelace
The Long Way To A Small, Angry Planet (2015)
The Wayfarer's AI system is an absolute sweetheart, who's also in a relationship with one of the ship's engineers. Yes, it is complicated.



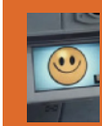
Grandmother
I Sing The Body Electric (1969)
The android electric grandmother of Ray Bradbury's short story is brought in to replace the family's mother, and she'll do anything for her charges.



Marvin
The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy (1979)
Okay, so 'benevolent' might be a bit of a stretch, but he doesn't actually mean anybody any harm. He just can't see the point in going on in such a pointless universe.



Holly
Red Dwarf (1988)
Both versions of Holly are doing their best to keep the crew of the Red Dwarf alive and get them back to civilisation. He – or sometimes she – has just become a bit peculiar after centuries alone.



GERTY
Moon (2009)
Duncan Jones' *Moon* is pessimistic about our future in many, many ways, but Sam Bell's companion has a heart underneath its emoji display. "I hope life on Earth is everything you remember it to be."



Details **Writer:** Ivan Brandon **Artist:** Nic Klein **Publisher:** Image Comics
Price: £13.99 **Released:** 10 November

DRIFTER: LIT BY FIRE

Nobody is an island

It's time to let you in on a little secret about the smartest sci-fi comic in recent years: this is the third volume, making it an unlikely choice for a review, but folks, it's just that damn good.

Abram Pollux tumbles from the stars when his ship takes a nosedive onto a planet of dust and ruin. Ouro is a backwater world, as forgotten by the universe as the fading memories the inhabitants struggle to hold on to. Miraculously, Pollux survives both the crash and the blast to the guts that greets his arrival. Three days pass, only for Pollux to awaken to a world where his ship crashed one year ago, and the man who shot him appears to save his life.

The blend of pulp Westerns and philosophical sci-fi is nothing new, but what has been created here is something greater than the sum of its familiar parts. Dialogue and narration has an off-kilter beat, not quite standard English for not quite standard humans, and this arrhythmic approach extends to the narrative that moves between moments of action and time with the expectation that the reader fills in the missing pieces.

Drifter boasts an extensive and diverse cast, and an array of alien life forms both fantastic and grotesque. First glance shows three major lifeforms at home on Ouro: the humans, descendants perhaps of the previous mining age or simply wanderers who have rolled in to humanity's industrial remains; the Wheelers, humanoid entities both peaceful and violent who are to be avoided at all costs; and the native Blues, a gentle species who are drawn to sadness.

Pollux encounters the latter when he crawls from the wreckage of the ship. Reacting with fear and violence, he shoots a Blue who is trying to help him. As another helps their friend away from the death-bringing human, Pollux narrates, "It doesn't stop to see what a coward looks like".

After his own incident at the end of a gun, Pollux takes in the sight of the frontier-esque Ghost Town, a ramshackle hub for the humans of Ouro, where Lee Carter, his medic saviour and local marshal, endeavours to prevent him from throwing his life away in the name of revenge.

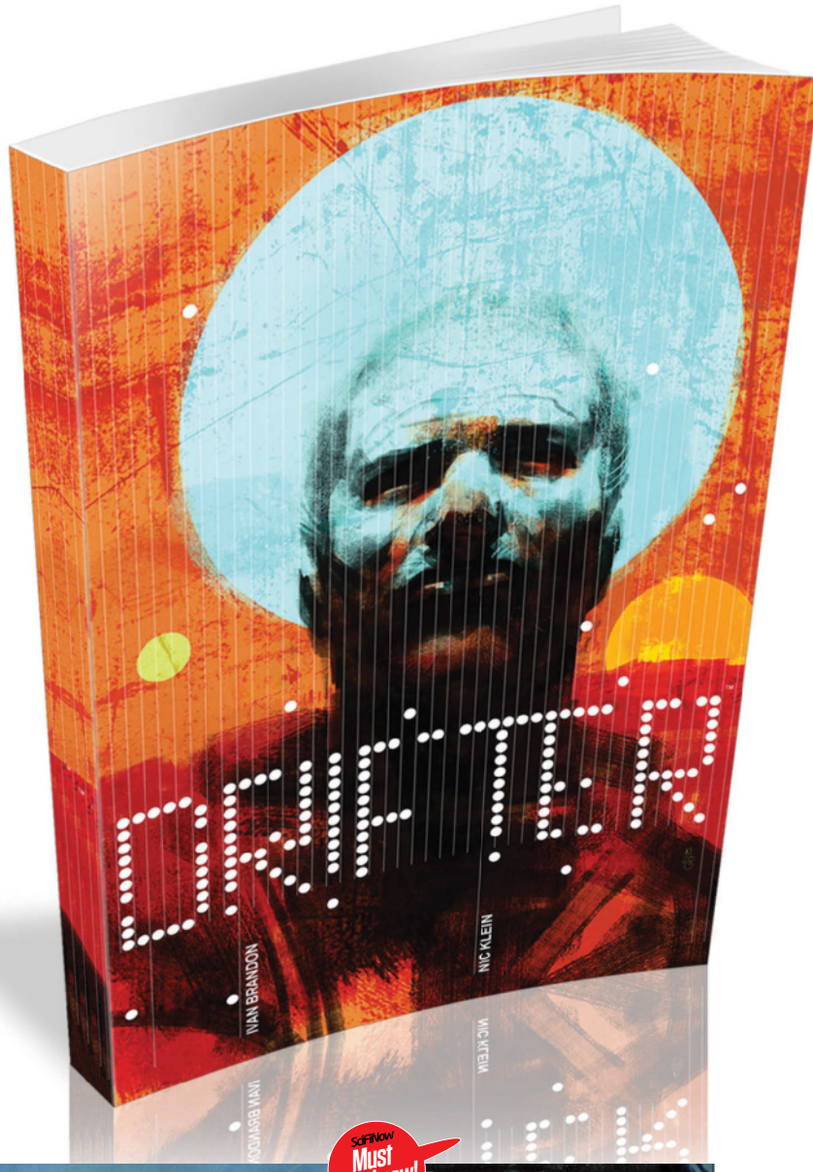
Carter and the priest emerge as the two central characters, with Lee providing a grounding presence in a narrative that pounces from point to point. Pollux is a survivor – his role evolves and mutates in a manner not dissimilar to the better RPG icons in an open-world arena.

Highly detailed, exquisitely rendered and with incredible designs, even those who have found *Drifter* not to their liking have conceded that the art makes this an instant success. Intriguingly for an artist known for his experimental layouts, Klein dials it back and lets the panel contents take centre stage – and boy do they.

Credit must be given to the innovative design work of Tom Muller and letterer Clem Robins, that is in harmony with the aesthetic vision. The covers embrace Muller's minimal, grid-based, modular direction, while Robins' hand-lettering keeps the idea of humanity at the forefront.

If you like your sci-fi to be challenging, embrace obfuscation and puzzling, not to mention enjoy incredible artwork suffused with tangible atmosphere, you should definitely give *Drifter* a spin.

Laura Sneddon



9

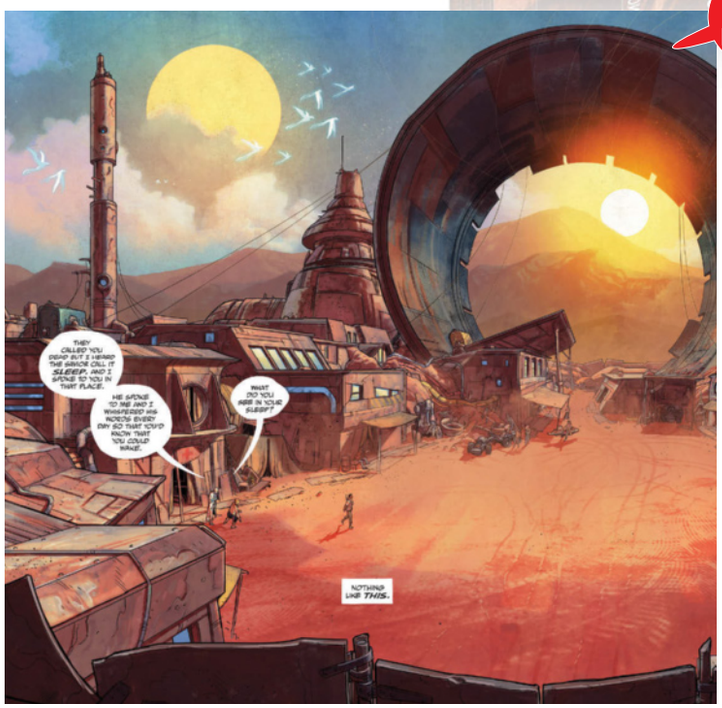
SciFiNow scored **9** for
Drifter: Lit By Fire

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Annihilator
Grant Morrison, Frazer Irving
Mind-bending and puzzling sci-fi of another kind, with incredible fully painted art throughout.



SciFiNow Must read now!





Details **Writer:** Jody Houser **Artists:** Pere Pérez, Marguerite Sauvage
Publisher: Valiant **Price:** £13.99 **Released:** 17 November

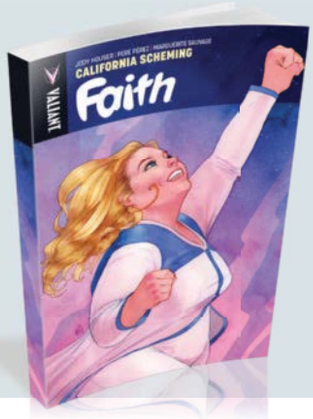
FAITH

Five by five

SciFiNow Must read now!

Her first miniseries was a roaring success, and now comics' nerdiest superhero is back with an ongoing title and a thriving fandom.

Valiant Comics have been carving out an interconnected world of superheroes outside the better-known universes, but while *Faith* does feature characters from older series, the title requires no previous knowledge of her world.



In a tribute to the original GOAT hero, *Faith*'s low-key alter ego is Summer Smith, a roving journali-err, digital content provider. Her hero name is Zephyr, a point Summer tries to remind her fellow writers of frequently, as the world refers to their hero as 'Faith'.

Spliced between traditional shenanigans are dream sequences of Faith and her own geek crush, the Hollywood actor Chris, who plays every superhero in the movies. Sound familiar?

As delightful as it is to see a superhero that doesn't fit the usual physical mould, it's the multi-layered writing approach to Faith that really sells her as the greatest of new superheroes.

Laura Sneddon

8 SciFiNow scored **8** for Faith
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

Details **Writers:** Pat Mills, Malcolm Shaw **Artists:** John Armstrong, Brian Delaney **Publisher:** 2000 AD **Price:** £14.99 **Released:** Out now

MISTY

Too scary for girls? Ha!

SciFiNow Must read now!

A long time ago, in a galaxy not so far away, girls comics were a huge business. Here in the UK they regularly outsold the boys comics, with *Misty* launching at a modest 170,000 copies a week – a startling figure, higher than today's superhero titles in the US.

Misty was packed with stories of the supernatural and horrific, toned down a little to avoid the ire of nosy parents, but still packing enough of a punch to bewitch many a young reader.



Long out of print, 2000 AD have collected two of the best stories at last – 'Moonchild' and 'The Four Faces Of Eve'. The former has a distinct influence from *Carrie* hovering over it, tweaked nicely for the reality of British schools. The latter is a slight nod to *Audrey Rose* that manages to be even creepier than the 1977 psychological horror film.

Clad in a delicious Shirley Bellwood portrait of Misty herself, this is a glorious tribute to the heyday of British comics. It's the perfect bridge into the world of graphic novels, and also perfect for mum!

Laura Sneddon

9 SciFiNow scored **9** for Misty
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

Details **Writer:** Tom King **Artists:** Barnaby Bagenda, Romulo Fajardo Jr
Publisher: DC Comics **Price:** £22.99 **Released:** Out now

THE OMEGA MEN: BEWARE

Thou art the end, the curtain, the omega



SciFiNow Must read now!

Who are the Omega Men? The lack of recognisable characters at first glance may explain why this remarkable little series flew almost completely under the radar when released in single issues, only to top the charts as soon as it was published in collected form.

Originally appearing back in the *Green Lantern* comics of the Eighties, the Omega Men are a renegade bunch rebelling against an oppressive ruling race in their home system of Vega. Tom King and Barnaby Bagenda essentially reboot the team here, telling their story in a complete 176-page epic.

Opening with a startling and unsettling execution scene, the Omega Men have captured Kyle Rayner, most famous of the Lanterns and currently known as the White Lantern. On a mission to try and bring peace to Vega, Rayner has stepped into a political mess, the likes of which superhero comics often shy away from – King's own background as a former operative for the CIA is evident in the layers of authentic complexity he has spun through the pages.

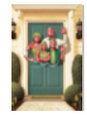
A shocking start followed by a slow burn of threads coming together and fraying in unexpected directions really distinguishes this from other superhero comics. With no insult to the Bat and Superfolks intended, this is as remarkable a work seen at DC since the heyday of Vertigo, when more unusual comics such as *Sandman* and *Preacher* were allowed to blossom.

The characters originate from a handful of very different planets, and Bagenda has clearly had fun putting his own spin on the team. Each world visited is a new one to build and populate across the panels, and the layouts achieve a dynamic and cinematic feel without losing the experimental edge that the comics medium is so partial to.

Who are the Omega Men? Pick this up and see!

Laura Sneddon

8 SciFiNow scored **8** for The Omega Men
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
Vision
Tom King, Gabriel Hernandez Walta
King's series for the other side, bringing humanity and horror into domestic suburbia.







Jock tells us that he wasn't confident this Joker piece was up to scratch!

The Art Of Jock

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Comics, movie posters, concept art – Jock is one of the busiest artists around, and he still found time to talk us through his greatest hits...

You will know Jock's work, even if you don't immediately recognise the name (although you probably know that too). Starting on 2000 AD, Jock's work with writers like Andy Diggle and Scott Snyder on comics like *The Losers*, *Batman* and *Wytches* has cemented his reputation as one of the most in-demand artists working, and his Mondo posters break the Internet regularly.

Recently, he has moved into movies, working on concept art for some of our favourite recent films, including *Ex Machina*, *Dredd* and the upcoming *Star Wars: Episode VIII*. It seems only right that he's being celebrated with a new book, *The Art Of Jock*. "My honest reaction was, 'Why would you want a book of my stuff?' and I wasn't just being British and self-deprecating," he laughs. "I honestly never thought that I would be in this position, so I feel very lucky."

THE JOKER

Are you ever surprised by the pieces that really strike a chord with people?

People's responses to some pieces have taken me by surprise. There's a cover of the Joker that I did for DC, and when I was working on it I thought that it was okay, but I certainly didn't think it was anything particularly special. I remember sending it to my friend Lee Garbett, and I was like, "Should I crop this – is it a bit boring? It's just his head..." and Lee said, "No, that's fine. Trust me, send it in." Then I sent it to my editor at DC and asked, "How's this looking?" and his reply was "Like the best cover I've ever seen." And I was like "Oh!" And I shared it online, and the response was ridiculous.

So it's more that maybe my own barometer isn't exact. It can take you by surprise, and also maybe as the artist you're seeing different things in it; you're looking for different things. It can be surprising, but it's a case of trying to trust your gut and instincts, and hope that someone else will respond to the image that you're trying to share.

> "I SENT IT TO MY EDITOR, AND HIS REPLY WAS "THE BEST COVER I'VE EVER SEEN"" JOCK

GREEN ARROW: YEAR ONE

The *Green Arrow: Year One* story you and Andy Diggle did obviously had a huge impact.

We heard that the *Arrow* TV show was inspired by *Year One*. We weren't told! I was at San Diego, and they were doing a panel for the show. Season One was just coming out, and I saw an interview with Marc Guggenheim [*Arrow* producer], and they were like, "We didn't think we could do this TV show until we saw this comic called *Arrow: Year One*," and honestly I had no idea at all!

Really, that origin story is not a *Green Arrow* story; it's about a guy that's stranded on the island, and that left me and Andy free to handle it the way that we wanted to. The only remit was to have him on that last page in Star City in his Green Arrow costume, so that gave us a bit of creative license. I think sometimes when you have that, that lets you push the boundaries a little bit more, and maybe that's the stuff people respond to.

You regularly work with brilliant writers like Scott Snyder and Andy Diggle. Do they pretty much leave you to your own devices, or is it a very collaborative process?

Both, to be honest. Scott's very open to story ideas, suggestions and changes to the script, but the truth is that he's such a good writer that I don't need to be doing that. And the same with Andy; we're very collaborative, but at the same time I trust him, which is the best of both worlds. They're friends.

So we can chat and discuss it, but I really look forward to getting the scripts, because they're always really good, and there's very little that I have to do to them to make them better. I feel pretty lucky to work with both of those, and other writers as well, that I consider friends first and foremost, and I think that really helps the working relationship.



***Arrow: Year One* was a huge influence on the TV show.**

DRAWING ICONS

Is it intimidating working on characters that are so iconic, like Judge Dredd, Batman and John Constantine?

I've been very lucky that I've worked on characters that I really like. I find that I have to like the character to draw it well. It's something that I've noticed as the years have gone by, that if I try to draw a character that I don't know or that I haven't read very much of, I just don't just enjoy it very much.

Something about the resonance that you have when you've read a character for a while, that maybe you ⇨



Judge Dredd was one of Jock's earliest jobs.

can bring something to it because you know that character, like Judge Dredd and Batman, I just approach it first and foremost as a fan. I love those characters, it's a genuine honour to get to draw these characters, and I try not to be too daunted by it either, because that can stifle you. You just have to accept that "Okay, it's my turn now, and I've got to give it all I've got."

MONDO POSTERS

Is that also true of working on the Mondo posters, where you're creating a vision for these amazing films?

Yeah…[laughs] When I first started doing Mondo posters that was a whole different level. Two or three years ago, any Mondo poster that you did was a news story. When you do a comic cover it might be huddled among 25 others in the stations that month. If you do a Mondo poster for *Dredd* or *The Dark Knight*, there's going to be stories on news sites with the poster. The first few times it was… I don't want to say

> **"I APPROACH IT FIRST AND FOREMOST AS A FAN. I LOVE THESE CHARACTERS, AND I TRY NOT TO BE TOO DAUNTED BY IT"**
> **JOCK**

stressful, but it did give a whole other level of concern!

I can be quite doubting of myself and my work, as I think most artists can be, and to just have the confidence to do an image that you thought was good enough to support those amazing films and amazing properties… But as the years go by you just learn to fizzle that out a bit and not think about it that way. I've been working on a few new posters for Mondo now, which are definite personal favourites, and I've got to do the other two *Star Wars* posters, I did *A New Hope* for Comic-Con, and I'm doing *Empire* and *Jedi*, so things like that. If I thought about it too much it would be daunting, but actually I feel very lucky to be able to bring something to those properties.

WYTCHES

We need to talk about *Wytches*, because that comic is absolutely terrifying.

I'm a big horror fan, and I was nervous because I think it's really hard to make a scary comic, because the reader always has control over the pace or the page turn. When you're watching a film there's an element of giving yourself up to the film, and with a comic you can stop. So that presented its own challenges, trying to make it creepy and disturbing, but on a printed flat page. A few people have said that it genuinely freaked them out a bit, and I'm so pleased to hear it.

The colouring that Matt [Hollingsworth] came up with is a massive part of the look of *Wytches*, and it's very aggressive. It sometimes can



Jock's signature style is increasingly in demand.





Love horror comics? You need to read *Wytches*.





Jock has created many amazing Mondo posters.





almost obscure some of the imagery, which when you're telling a scene that's in the forest in the dark, and also you can't quite make out what's going on, the temptation was to think that's a really good thing, that it will hopefully make it even more disturbing to read, because it's not clear what's going on in some panels and Matt brought so much to that. It's horrific and intense colouring, but it's also quite beautiful. Some of the images and tones that he managed to get I think look really tasteful and beautiful.

I think it brings a really unique look to the book, which is a really nice thing in this day and age; to be able to bring something a bit different. It was trying to not just make it horrific like a slasher movie, but also make it hopefully a bit richer and deeper as well.

CONCEPT ART AND DREDD

How did you start doing concept art?

The concept work was something that I fell into by accident, really. I got to know Peter Berg, who was the writer-director who was going to do *The Losers*. He really liked my stuff, and whenever he worked on a new film he'd give me a shout and ask if I wanted to do a bit of work for it, and then I heard he was working on *Dune*, the Frank Herbert adaptation. It never came out actually, but I heard he was working on it, so I just emailed him and said if you ever want any art for *Dune*, and he said, "Yeah, do you want to do some concept stuff?" and I said "Yep!"

How did your work on the *Dredd* film come about?

I heard that *Dredd* had gone into production, and I did some pieces for my own amusement and put them online, and one of them got picked up as a news story as actual concept art for *Dredd*.

Then I got a call from the producers, and I panicked because I thought I was going to get in trouble, but they liked what they saw, and asked if I wanted to work on *Dredd*, which led to me working with Alex and working on his next two films as well, *Ex Machina* and *Annihilation*.

That's how it happened, but the actual process is very different to comics or posters. But I like that; I like having different ways that you can flex your muscles. It's a different mindset really, coming up with concept work. It is different, but it's tough to explain how!

EX MACHINA AND AVA

It must be great to see the reaction to *Ex Machina*, and to the design of Ava!





Jock worked with Alex Garland on *Ex Machina*.

I worked with Alex [Garland] on that before anything was green-lit or in production. I was pretty much the fourth person to see the script. It was about six weeks of just me and him working out what Ava was going to look like. I didn't even know if the film was going to get made, and certainly didn't have any concept of how well it's done. It got an Oscar for visual effects, which is just mind-blowing.

I went into the editing suite when they were editing *Ex Machina*, and they were able to flick a switch between having the effects layer on and the effects layer off, and for the first time seeing this creation that we'd only… it's like when *The Losers* movie got made, you do the drawings and you create something, but they only exist in your head. And when you see them made 'real', that's a whole other level of… I don't know, it's a really amazing thing. And the first time I saw Ava, I was shocked. She looked so beautiful on film, and the effects guys brought so much to it in her design as well.

I love doing that, and I've just finished working on *Star Wars VIII*. I did costume design, nine months up at Pinewood on that, and I did… I'm not going to say anything; sorry, I'm immediately realising I should zip my lips! [laughs]



The Art Of Jock by Will Dennis and Jock is available to buy now, published by Titan Books.

Space may be vast but it's anything but empty

Praise for *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet:*

'A quietly profound, humane tour de force' *Guardian*

'Great fun!' Ann Leckie

'Joyously written and a joy to read' Claire North

'A joyous, optimistic space opera' *Tor.com*

3,500 five star ratings on Goodreads



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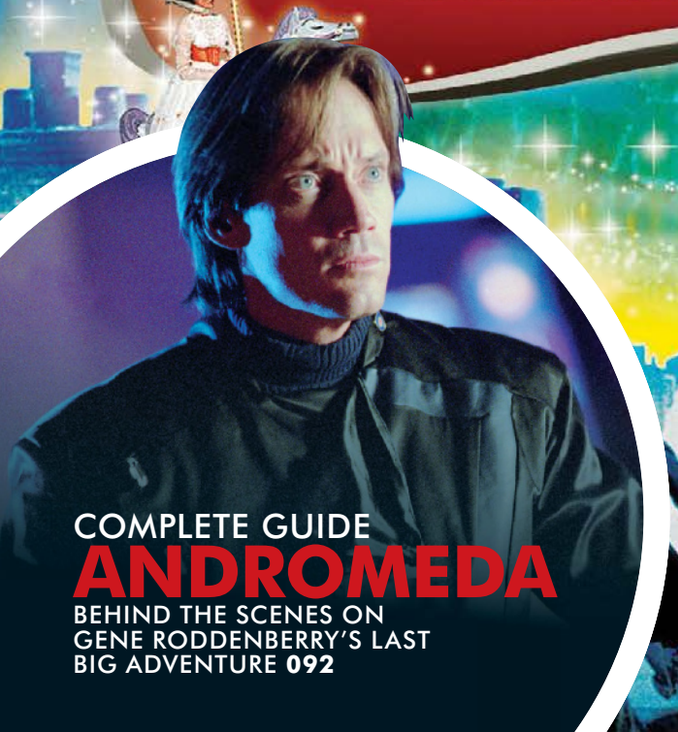
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AN IMAGINE MONTHLY



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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO ANDROMEDA

ROOTED FIRMLY IN THE STAR TREK FRANCHISE, THIS SERIES FELL SHORT OF THE AMBITIONS BEHIND IT, BUT STILL RAN FOR FIVE ACTION-PACKED SEASONS. WE HEAR THE STORY OF ANDROMEDA FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT HAPPEN…

WORDS **MICHAEL SIMPSON**

You have to go back two decades to find a time when Gene Roddenberry's name was still inseparable from the *Star Trek* brand. Although he had long since ceased to influence the destiny of the franchise by the time he passed away in 1991, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine* would ensure that he remained a marketable asset thanks to writers such as Robert Hewitt Wolfe.

Working on *DS9* brought Wolfe into contact with Roddenberry's widow, Majel Barrett-Roddenberry, who had a recurring role in the show as Lwaxana Troi. In the mid-Nineties, Majel had opened up her late husband's archives to Tribune Entertainment, the television production division of US entertainment conglomerate Tribune Media. This resulted in the series *Earth: Final Conflict*, which debuted in 1997. When Tribune's brass then decided to dig around Roddenberry's undeveloped ideas looking for a *Star Trek*-style show that could take advantage of his name, Majel helped Wolfe get a foot in the door. With his commitment to *DS9* ending in 1999, Wolfe was given a crack at the genesis of what would become Gene Roddenberry's *Andromeda*.

"They had signed a deal with Kevin Sorbo, and they wanted to do something sci-fi," Wolfe recalls. "They had the rights to essentially the Roddenberry estate, so they wanted to use his notes and Kevin to create a sci-fi show. They wanted to try two different approaches: one was a planet-based show, sort of like *Lost* on a planet, and then the other approach was to be a starship show. They approached a different set of writers for that planet-based show, and then they asked me if I was interested in the starship show."

Wolfe remembers finding in Roddenberry's work a recurring theme that grabbed his attention. The idea didn't fit with Tribune's plan for a space-based series, but aspects of it would later be echoed in *Andromeda*'s premise. "He kept reworking this sort of post-apocalyptic Earth-based show, and called it a lot of different things, but the idea was a guy from our time inside this dome that's frozen in time," Wolfe says. "Some years later he wakes up, and the Earth has turned into a shit show, and he has to try to fix it."

This idea dovetailed nicely with a concept that Wolfe himself had been toying with during his time on *DS9*. "As a sort of mental exercise for myself, I had theorised what I would do if somebody asked me to create a *Star Trek* show," he explains. "I thought that it would be fun to do a show in which it was set further in the future than what we'd seen, the Federation had fallen and someone found a Federation ship that was self-aware, and this ship convinced them to try to fix things."

Wolfe's pitch to Tribune blended these elements and shaped them to fit the formula that had by then been working for *Star Trek*'s second generation of shows for over a decade. Drawing on his own *Trek* idea, he invented the Systems Commonwealth, a progressive and utopian institution like the Federation, but much older and spanning multiple galaxies. He then destroyed it in *Andromeda*'s premiere, 'Under The Night', plunging the so-called Known Worlds into a chaotic state called The Long Night.

To keep *Andromeda* consistent with the *Star Trek* template, Wolfe decided to explore this scenario through the experiences of a diverse starship crew led by a strong-willed captain. Casting the latter was a no-brainer; after six seasons of *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, Sorbo was a bankable star.

"He had a lot of charisma," Wolfe says. "I think he brought a level of humour, and when he is engaged and focused, Kevin can do some real nice bits of acting. He also has a tremendous amount of presence, and when it was time to do the difficult stuff he was more than capable of selling the action sequences. I think he sold the flawed but noble hero quite well."

That hero was Dylan Hunt, a name Roddenberry had used himself in his failed 1973 pilot *Genesis II*, which centred on the post-apocalyptic scenario that Wolfe had been inspired by. Gene had repeated the idea with *Planet Earth*, but that didn't get far either, so he might have been pleased that Wolfe successfully adapted it 25 years later. In 'Under The Night', Hunt is trapped with his ship, the Andromeda Ascendant, and its Artificial Intelligence (played by Lexa Doig), in the grip of a black hole during a decisive battle with the genetically engineered human subspecies responsible for the Commonwealth's downfall: the Nietzscheans. When he finally frees the Andromeda, 300 years have passed and the universe needs someone to bring it new hope.

"There's a little bit of Don Quixote to him in a way in that his world has been essentially destroyed, and his choices are to either go insane or try to do something about it," Wolfe says of Hunt's predicament.

Having already drawn on *Star Trek*'s concept of the Federation, it would have been easy for Wolfe to populate the Andromeda's crew with Starfleet equivalents. Instead, he adopted an approach that has since become a space opera trope. "My original impetus was that the people doing the work of trying to rebuild this civilisation should not be part of it, and they shouldn't be easy recruits," explains Wolfe. "They should have their own agendas, and their goals aren't always maybe so lofty."

Wolfe's script for the opening episode gets rid of the Andromeda's original Commonwealth crew early in the story. To replace them, Hunt recruits the first people he encounters: a bunch of opportunists who are trying to salvage the stranded ship. Played by lesser-known Canadian and American actors, they initially include two humans: Beka Valentine (Lisa Ryder) and Seamus Harper (Gordon Michael Woolvett), and two aliens: Trance Gemini (Laura Bertram) and Reverend Bem (Brent Stait). Also tagging along is a Nietzschean named Tyr Anasazi, played by Keith Hamilton Cobb.

"Tribune had done a show shot in Australia called *BeastMaster*, and I had done a recurring guest spot ⇨

COMPLETE GUIDE TO ANDROMEDA



Reverend Behemial Far Traveller was the full name of Brent Stait's character.

on that show as a warrior named Akili," says Cobb. "Karen Corbin was the executive at Tribune in charge of development, and had suggested that they add me to the cast of *Andromeda* that had already been assembled. I met with Robert Hewitt Wolfe, and I think he was ultimately inspired to conceive a new character and write him into the show bible."

Andromeda premiered on 2 October 2000 after Tribune had signed a co-financing deal with Fireworks Entertainment, a Canadian production company founded by *Andromeda*'s executive producer Jay Firestone. What followed was a creditable first season of 22 episodes, several of which regularly pop up in fans' top ten lists. Of particular note is 'Angel Dark, Demon Bright'. Harking back to the classic *Star Trek* episode 'City On The Edge Of Forever' and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s 'Yesterday's Enterprise', the plot sends the Andromeda back in time to just before the decisive battle with the Nietzscheans. Knowing the fate of the Commonwealth is at stake, Hunt must decide whether to intervene or let history take its course.

"That one I think turned out really well, and really showed the characters and their different prejudices and strengths and weakness," Wolfe remembers. "It was what we always tried to do on *Star Trek*, which was give the main character a really interesting moral dilemma where the solution is not easy or black-and-white. It's not, 'Let's go blow these guys up'; it's 'Shit, do I really have to blow these guys up?' which is a better story."

Another of the first season's highlights is the finale, 'Its Hour Come 'Round At Last'. In this episode, the Andromeda's Artificial Intelligence malfunctions and the ship is overwhelmed by a bloodthirsty race called the Magog. We also see the Magog's world-ship, a massive structure consisting of several planets around an artificial sun. It was an ambitious climax to the season that put a heavy burden on the cash-strapped production.

"If there was one mistake I made, in my enthusiasm I threw a lot of things into the show that we really weren't able to produce," Wolfe says. "I was encouraged to throw a lot of stuff in. They wanted a lot of flash, but they didn't really have the money to pay for it, so that was always a challenge. An even bigger challenge than the visual effects – which I think we did okay with given the amount of money we had – was make-up effects, prosthetics and props. We just had no money for that stuff."

Andromeda's low budget was something the actors were aware of too, so they tried to compensate for the show's technical limitations with performances that carried extra conviction. "The actor is the one on camera," says Cobb. "Low budget is glaring

"THERE'S A BIT OF DON QUIXOTE IN HOW DYLAN HUNT'S WORLD HAS BEEN DESTROYED, AND HIS CHOICES ARE TO GO INSANE OR DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT"

ROBERT HEWITT WOLFE



David Winning directed some of *Andromeda*'s best episodes throughout the series' five-year run.

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CREW ROSTER

Your handy guide to Dylan Hunt's loyal crew



DYLAN HUNT

SPECIES: Human
PERSONALITY: Driven but compassionate
PLAYED BY: Kevin Sorbo
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Five (regular)

Captain of the Andromeda Ascendant, Commonwealth evangelist and the last survivor of a super-race called the Paradine.





BEKA VALENTINE

SPECIES: Human
PERSONALITY: Strong-willed and resourceful
PLAYED BY: Lisa Ryder
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Five (regular)

Owner of the space hauler Eureka Maru, Valentine does double-duty as Captain Dylan Hunt's second-in-command.



SEAMUS HARPER

SPECIES: Human
PERSONALITY: Sarcastic and wimpy
PLAYED BY: Gordon Michael Woolvett
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Five (regular)

A tech wizard, Harper is called upon to fix Andromeda's AI. He develops a crush on her, and builds two androids to contain her programming.

ANDROMEDA/ROMMIE

SPECIES: Artificial Intelligence
PERSONALITY: Can be aloof and uncompromising
PLAYED BY: Lexa Doig
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Four (regular), Season Five (recurring)

The avatar of the Andromeda's AI, Rommie is later given form as an autonomous android by Seamus Harper.





DOYLE

SPECIES: Artificial Intelligence
PERSONALITY: Loyal but naive
PLAYED BY: Brandy Ledford
APPEARED IN: Season Five (regular)

Female synthetic built by Harper as his bodyguard, lover and replacement avatar for Andromeda's AI while the original isn't working.



REV BEM

SPECIES: Magog
PERSONALITY: Peace-loving and compassionate
PLAYED BY: Brent Stait
APPEARED IN: Seasons One and Two (regular), Seasons Three and Four (guest)

A follower of The Way, Reverend Behemial Far Traveller has forsaken his species' barbaric practices.



TYR ANASAZI

SPECIES: Nietzschean
PERSONALITY: Aggressive and volatile
PLAYED BY: Keith Hamilton Cobb
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Three (regular), Season Four (recurring)

Born into the Kodiak Pride, which was later slaughtered by another Nietzschean faction, Tyr becomes a mercenary and assassin-for-hire.



TRANCE GEMINI

SPECIES: Avatar of a sun
PERSONALITY: Happy-go-lucky turned threatening
PLAYED BY: Laura Bertram
APPEARED IN: Seasons One to Five (regular)

Originally the nearest thing the crew has to a science officer, Trance is revealed to be much more when she meets her future self.

TELEMACHUS RHADE

SPECIES: Nietzschean
PERSONALITY: Proud and independent
PLAYED BY: Steve Bacic
APPEARED IN: Season Two (guest), Seasons Four and Five (regular)

Descended from Hunt's traitorous former First Officer, Gaheris Rhade, Telemachus confronts the Andromeda's captain before becoming his ally.



© NASA

10 ESSENTIAL ANDROMEDA EPISODES

UNDER THE NIGHT
(Season One, Episode One)
Never mind the dour electronic score and wooden acting; the two-part series premiere establishes *Andromeda*'s premise and introduces the main characters.



ANGEL DARK, DEMON BRIGHT
(Season One, Episode Six)
The Andromeda goes back in time, and Hunt has to make a decision that will decide the fate of the Commonwealth.



THE MATHEMATICS OF TEARS
(Season One, Episode 12)
The crew finds another Commonwealth ship, the Pax Magellanic, and has to determine why the survivors haven't aged.



ITS HOUR COME 'ROUND AT LAST
(Season One, Episode 22)
Season One ends on a cliffhanger when masses of Magog board the Andromeda, overwhelming the crew and make-up department.



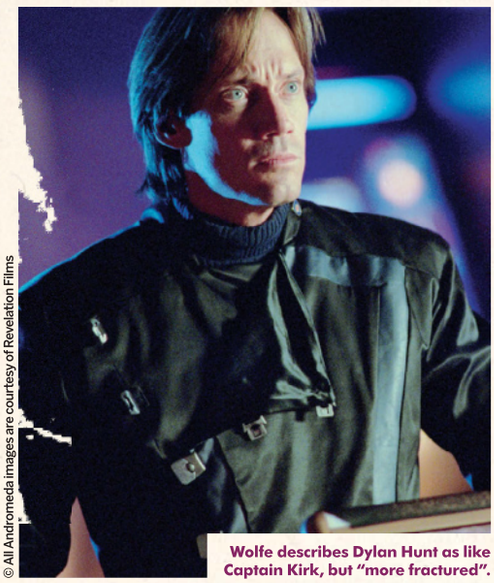
OUROBOROS
(Season Two, Episode 12)
The Magog eggs incubating inside Harper since the second season premiere are about to hatch, and Trance Gemini gets a makeover.



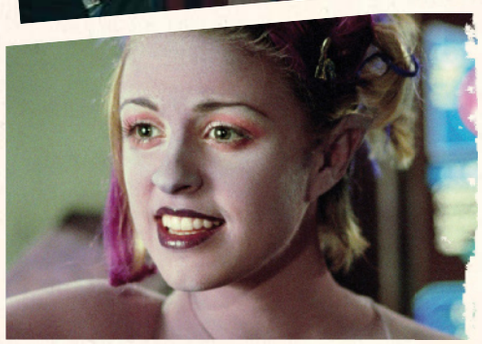


Tight leather was top sci-fi fashion at the turn of the millennium.





Wolfe describes Dylan Hunt as like Captain Kirk, but "more fractured".



on the TV screen, and the actor stands there in the middle of it. He wears it. He speaks it. He attempts to give authenticity and depth to what lack of funds has removed."

According to a press announcement, Tribune had already secured two-year commitments from multiple US stations owned by its parent company, thereby ensuring a second season. That started with 'The Widening Gyre', which resolved the first season's cliffhanger, but started an ongoing arc about Harper being infected with parasitic Magog eggs. There were also signs of a growing rapport between Harper and Tyr. The second season held plenty of promise for the development of the other members of the main ensemble too. For example, in the episode 'Ouroboros', the original form of Trance Gemini is replaced by her mysterious and powerful future self, simultaneously expanding her character's potential and the series' mythology.

Yet, acting against this promise were problems behind the scenes. Wolfe's long-term vision for *Andromeda* was no longer working for everyone. In an ironic throwback to the early days of *Star Trek*, he was essentially accused of being too cerebral. The outcome was predictable. Rather than make a less interesting show on an ever-diminishing budget, Wolfe parted company with Tribune before *Andromeda*'s second season was over.

"I was let go, as they say, for creative differences, so that was miserable and unfortunate," Wolfe recalls. "I think it was a little bit to the detriment of the show, which is kind of what hurts the most, because I had bigger ambitions for the show than I think the people paying for it did. Not to pat myself on the back, but I think I understood better than they did the idea of residual value for television."

Wolfe's departure was followed shortly by the jettisoning of the show's original conceit. By the end of the season, Hunt had recreated the Commonwealth, albeit on a small scale. Even in its limited form, this achievement seemed rushed, undermining the credibility of the series. It also left subsequent seasons as little more than a rambling series of adventures bound together by the vague allusion to making the universe 'safe' in the new opening credits monologue that was introduced in Season Three.

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Ranking the best moments in the series

TUNNEL AT THE END OF THE LIGHT
(Season Two, Episode 22)
The founding of a new Systems Commonwealth is threatened when the Andromeda is sabotaged during the ratification ceremony.



DOUBLE OR NOTHINGNESS
(Season Four, Episode Four)
Award-winning episode in which Hunt must solve the mystery of a battle that appears not to have happened.



THE DISSONANT INTERVAL
(Season Four, Episode 21-22)
The Magog attack a peaceful space station and Hunt discovers his true nature in this two-part season finale.



PRIDE BEFORE THE FALL
(Season Five, Episode 12)
Andromeda's 100th episode explains the origin of the Nietzscheans and ends with a celebratory gag reel.



THE HEART OF THE JOURNEY
(Season Five, Episodes 21-22)
The series finale wraps up some of the major subplots and provides a send-off for the characters.



"The first two seasons stand out because they were the only two seasons where Tyr's character was seriously explored," says Cobb of his experience. "Mostly in Season One. They were also the seasons that Robert Hewitt Wolfe presided over. He was serious about telling compelling stories with roots in actual science."

Dissatisfied with where his character was going, Cobb gave up his role as a series regular. "It was not about the perpetuation of a payday for me. I wanted to act, I wanted to dig deep, and I wanted to tell compelling stories. That all sadly faded with the ousting of Robert Wolfe. By the end of Season Three I was well ready to go."

By this time, Brent Stait had also jumped ship and become just an occasional guest star, although not out of frustration with the scripts. Stait was unrecognisable under the make-up for Rev Bem, and his Magog costume took its toll. Stories circulated that he left because he had an allergic reaction to the latex appliances, but in a 2011 interview on the site *Republibot* he dismissed that explanation.

"I left the show because I was exhausted," Stait said. "I never had any reaction to the make-up other than I was in it for hours and hours on end. I don't know where that allergy idea popped up. I was chemically burned once, but that was not due to allergy. The suit was a combination of yak hair and synthetic, I believe, and it was very, very hot."

These departures made room for Steve Bacic to join the Andromeda's crew in Season Four as the ⇨

> "I WAS LET GO FOR CREATIVE DIFFERENCES… I HAD BIGGER AMBITIONS FOR THE SHOW THAN I THINK THE PEOPLE PAYING FOR IT DID"
> ROBERT HEWITT WOLFE



The show had its own version of the iconic sci-fi bar in Season Five.



"KEVIN'S GOT ZERO EGO, HE'S INCREDIBLY, INCREDIBLY INTELLIGENT, AND HE'S JUST A REAL NICE KIND OF DOWN-HOME FARMBOY"

DAVID WINNING

Kevin Sorbo is credited with always making it fun on set.

© All Andromeda images are courtesy of Revelation Films



Andromeda paved the way for crews of rogues and criminals.

Nietzschean character Telemachus Rhade. That might have been his last season on *Andromeda*, too, had it not been for Sci-Fi Channel. Fireworks Entertainment was closed down in the spring of 2004 and *Andromeda* was initially cancelled, but Syfy's predecessor stepped up and signed a deal with Tribune to give the show one final season.

Yet, Season Five proved to be a mixed blessing for fans, many of who now regard it as one too many. To stay within the tight budget, the writers had to contrive a back story that explained how the characters survived Season Four's climactic battle with the Magog and allow the same locations to be repeatedly reused. The solution was to have the crew stranded in the inescapable Seefra system and stick mostly to a planet where technology is banned. The resulting season was a listless jumble that didn't even always abide by the rules of its own genre. To make matters worse, Lexa Doig's pregnancy reduced her involvement, and Doyle, the character played by her replacement Brandy Ledford, was a shoddily written substitute.

Look at discussions about *Andromeda* on the Internet, and you are likely to find someone putting the blame on Sorbo for the series' decline after Wolfe's departure. He's sometimes accused of forcing Wolfe out and trying to make himself the centre of attention at the expense of his co-stars. However, people who actually worked on the show tell a different story.

"Kevin was a really nice guy," says actor Dean Wray, whose character, Fletcher, had to fight Hunt in the Season Two episode 'In Heaven Now Are Three'. "He cared about the show, and was very welcoming to people like myself who guested on the show. A gentleman, he autographed a couple of action shots for my two boys. He was just a genuine nice guy."

Wray's opinion is backed up by veteran Canadian TV director David Winning (*Todd And The Book Of Pure Evil*), who helmed numerous episodes of *Andromeda*. "Kevin's got zero ego, and he's incredibly, incredibly intelligent, and he's just a real nice kind of down-home farmboy," says Winning. "He's a strong force and an intimidating person, but he's a sweetheart… he's got a really big heart."

Sorbo's star appeal is undoubtedly a major reason why *Andromeda* lasted longer than most series of its kind. Whatever the reasons for its endurance though, it is generally judged to have not lived up to its potential. Even so, it was nominated for numerous awards in the US and Canada, with Winning alone picking up ten for episodes such as Season One's 'The Banks Of The Lethe' and the fourth season episodes 'Double Or Nothingness' and 'Machinery Of The Mind'.



The costume designers made the best of a tiny budget.



Reflecting on the show he created, Wolfe regrets that he couldn't give *Andromeda* "the kind of impact and staying power that a really great space opera can have". Still, he's grateful that Roddenberry's association with *Star Trek* has ensured that *Andromeda* hasn't been forgotten, and he looks back fondly on what he helped to achieve.

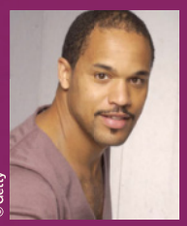
"That was really my ambition: to try to create a franchise that was larger than just 110 episodes of television," admits Wolfe. "Tribune didn't really share that ambition. But 110 episodes ain't nothing, and there's a lot of people I still talk to who grew up on that show and it was a part of their lives. I'm proud of it."



Andromeda: The Complete Collection is available to buy on DVD and Blu-ray now.

NIETZSCHEAN PRIDE

Keith Hamilton Cobb gives a lesson in Nietzschean philosophy and explains why his character, Tyr Anasazi, didn't follow it



© Getty

The Nietzscheans are a genetically engineered offshoot of humanity know scientifically as Homo sapiens invictus. The race's name derives from a devotion to the ideas of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. "The species thrived and grew in strength as the result of an instinctual proclivity I always called 'rabidly Darwinistic'," Cobb explains. "This is to say that only those among them proven to be the most superlative specimens of the race could breed. Thus, anything in the life of an individual that might suggest some measure of weakness rendered him or her undesirable as a mate."

"Tyr, because he was a member of an extinct tribe that had been decimated in a war, had the stigma of an inferior," adds Cobb. "At the same time, he was orphaned by the tribal holocaust at a very young age, which meant he then evolved into manhood beyond the cultural indoctrination of the Nietzschean race. This imbued him with traits that were not strictly Nietzschean, and allowed him time and space to contemplate other ways of life."





"JENNA HAD GREAT PROMISE ON PAPER, BUT IT WAS NEVER QUITE REALISED"
SALLY KNYVETTE

INTERVIEW

SALLY KNYVETTE

THE SCI-FI ICON TALKS TO US ABOUT LIFE ON AND AFTER BLAKE'S 7…

WORDS **STEVE O'BRIEN**

Actress, writer, director, teacher – in the 37 years since she gave up the role of smuggler-turned-freedom fighter Jenna Stannis in Seventies Brit space opera *Blake's 7*, Sally Knyvette has refashioned herself as a true Renaissance woman. Now, having finished her run directing her new play, *Burning Bridges*, she spoke to us about her time on the show and how it feels reprising the part in Big Finish's audio adventures.



Knyvette (second from right) reprised her *Blake's 7* role as Jenna Stannis in audio via Big Finish.

It's been nearly 40 years, what's your most vivid memory of the early days of *Blake's 7*?
I can remember my first day having a meeting with Ronnie Marsh [then Head of Serials at the BBC] and him telling us of the responsibility we had towards the show, and how it was going to be Britain's answer to *Star Wars*. He sat on his chair waving his legs, and we just looked at him as if to say, "Goodness, this is going to be big!" But I don't think any of us quite realised what we were going into in terms of how much it would impact and what an extraordinary following it would have.

Jenna was a strong character to start out with…
She had great promise on paper, but it was never realised. I felt quite strongly after the second year that I had to leave, because I didn't think the writing was being developed, particularly for the women. [Creator] Terry Nation agreed when I met him later on. The women were kind of sex symbols, and we each had our own defined role, but largely whenever anything dramatic happened, the men took over.

Was Terry Nation not around much on set?
No, never. I only met him in California. I don't recall ever meeting him when we were recording it. But he concurred, saying, "If only I'd known. If I'd have known the sort of person you are, I could have written better for you." He was very nice, but he said he was always better writing for men.

At what point in the series did you begin to lose faith in the character?
I didn't really lose faith, but I was very inexperienced as an actress, and I was frustrated because the writing became less good for me specifically. I was also very keen to go and study and do a degree, and I felt after we started getting the scripts for the second series, "This is the time to do it." I started doing A-Levels in evening classes, and so I was multi-tasking!



Ultimately, Jenna didn't get the proper send-off she deserved.

Jenna disappears between seasons. Were you annoyed at not being given a definitive exit?
Not really, because I thought there was potential for her to come back. Had there ever been another TV series or a film, she wasn't necessarily dead.

You returned to the role of Jenna in 2013 for Big Finish's first *Blake's 7* audio story. Did you need much persuading to return?
No, I was very pleased to be asked! I was at a very different stage of my life, and I always felt that I could have done a lot more with Jenna had I been a more experienced actress, had better writing or known more about the business, and in every case that was true when I was asked to do the Big Finish plays. They're fun to do, and it seems like the fans enjoy them.

Do you find the dynamics are the same as they were in the old days?
When we do the Big Finish recordings we pick up absolutely perfectly. It's as though it's ingrained in our subconscious. We have defined relationships with each other which pick up, even though we may not have seen each other for years. It's a very easy working relationship, and it's generally great fun to meet up and do the recordings, and indeed when we go to conventions. We've known each other more than half our lives!

Looking back, what do you think of *Blake's 7*?
It's remarkably better than I thought it was in terms of stories. Some of them are really very good. I think it looks very clunky at times, it's very dated, but I can understand why people still enjoy watching it. I show it to my little nephew, who's obsessed with *Star Wars*, but he gets bored very easily, because it's slow and it's not got the production values he's expecting.

We were shocked earlier this year to hear about the death of your co-star Gareth Thomas. Was it a big surprise to you?
To me, it wasn't a shock because I thought he was looking terribly ill the last time I saw him about nine months previously, and I was very worried about him. It was a shock, but it wasn't a complete shock.

What can you tell us about *Burning Bridges*?
It's about a young woman with Asperger's Syndrome who comes to visit her older sister and brother-in-law, and they think she's just come for a holiday, but then discover she's come forever. It explores the dilemmas of what it's like for a young woman in her early 20s trying to cope with what to eat, what you watch on television, and how you deal with your burgeoning sexuality. She sees through a different lens.

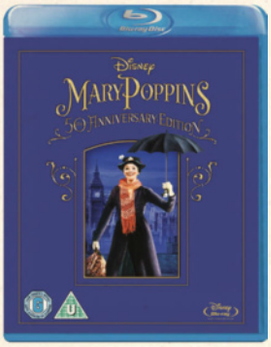
And so what's next for you?
A holiday! I shall be knackered after this. There may be some more Big Finish as well, I continuously teach young actors, and we'll see how this play goes. My hope is that this play will go on tour, or maybe transfer to the Trafalgar. Who knows?

Big Finish's *Blake's 7* adventures are available to buy now.

WORDS **POPPY-JAY PALMER**

IF MARY POPPINS PROVED ANYTHING, IT'S THAT THE ONLY THING SWEETER THAN A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR IS THE PARTNERSHIP OF JULIE ANDREWS AND DICK VAN DYKE. WE LOOK BACK AT WHAT WENT ON BEHIND THE SCENES, AND REDISCOVER WHY IT WILL ALWAYS BE A CLASSIC…

TimeWarp Retro Classic Film



MARY POPPINS

If *Mary Poppins* fails to fill your heart with love and joy every time you watch it then, frankly, you're either a fool or a non-human entity. Your soul would have to be as hollow and empty as Michael Banks' money box for you not to like it at least a little bit. It's just so darn lovely.

As a film that is simultaneously a musical, a comedy, a drama, live-action and an animation, it hits a lot of the bases with flying colours. And for a family film made in 1964 and set in 1910, it's remarkably progressive: Bert (Dick Van Dyke) lives a bohemian lifestyle, changing his career every day and not caring that there isn't any money in it; Mrs Banks (Glynis Johns) is a suffragette who partakes in political protests for votes for women; and though she's a nanny, Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) isn't there to save the children; she's there to save Mr Banks.

But its progressive nature is just one small part of it. It's also spectacular. That may just be an opinion, but it's one shared by the vast majority. *Mary Poppins* is a film for the whole family, it's a film for musical enthusiasts, and it's a film everyone gathers around to watch with blankets and hot chocolate during the winter holidays. It's a film for all occasions, and will likely continue to be just that forever. It's one of those that you can easily justify buying again and again every time it is re-released in time for various anniversaries.

Many Disney films can be enjoyed and then pushed aside (albeit while still humming the songs under your breath) without needing to put that much thought into their underlying messages. They're usually along the lines of 'be yourself', 'be courageous' and 'find yourself some animals to duet with and a nice prince to marry'. But *Mary Poppins*' moral is one worth remembering.

As a banker at the Dawes Tomes Mousley Grubbs Fidelity Fiduciary Bank, Mr George Banks (David Tomlinson) spends his life trying to provide for his family and make partner at work. But as an indirect result of him caring about the people he loves, he just ends up neglecting them and getting stressed out with their antics after a long day. It takes a visit from Mary Poppins, who effortlessly combines professionalism with magic, for him to realise just how warped his priorities are.

It doesn't matter how much you work or how much money you make if you're not happy. Mr Banks could do with taking a leaf out of Bert's book and trying out the bohemian life for a spell, and take Jane (Karen Dotrice), Michael (Matthew Garber) and Mrs Banks along with him. As obvious as it may seem, happiness is the key to a happy life, just as sure as a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.

Most know of the trouble Walt Disney had with *Mary Poppins* author PL Travers during production thanks to the 2013 biopic *Saving Mr Banks*: Travers was at first adamant about her stories not being made into a film – not least one with songs and animated sequences – as she felt that whatever Disney produced could not do them justice. So she put up a good fight for more than 20 years, but Walt being Walt, he eventually managed to talk her into it in 1961, while agreeing to let Travers act as an advisor and get script-approval rights.

However, Travers wasn't negative about every aspect of the film. One thing she had no trouble getting behind was the casting of Julie Andrews in the title role. She auditioned for Travers over the phone, and the latter only had to hear her speak once before thoroughly approving.

Mary Poppins was Andrews' first film role, but it was one that she almost missed ⇨

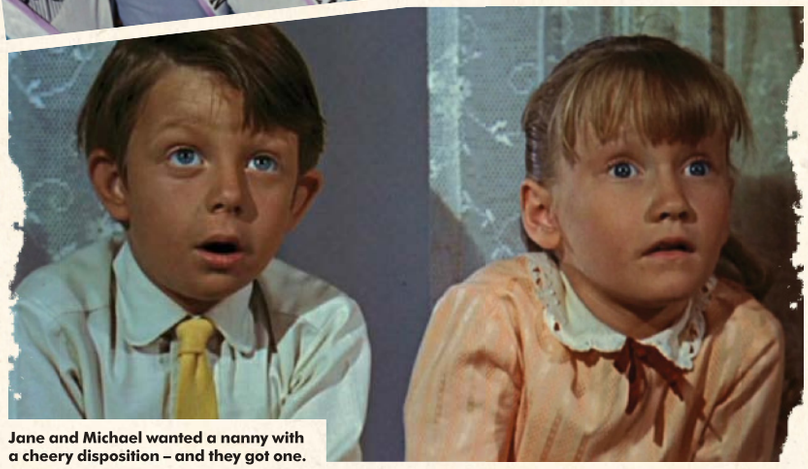
Film

RUNNING TIME: 139 minutes
RELEASE DATE: 27 August 1964
DIRECTOR: Robert Stevenson
WRITERS: Bill Walsh, Don DaGradi
CAST: Julie Andrews, Dick Van Dyke, David Tomlinson, Glynis Johns, Karen Dotrice, Matthew Garber

About

Jane and Michael Banks of 17 Cherry Tree Lane, London, chase after their kite in the park one day, and end up needing a police escort home. Ashamed of his children's wily behaviour, their strict banker father is determined to find them a suitable nanny to whip them into shape. At just the right time, the mysterious Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. But instead of disciplining the children, Poppins takes them and her jack-of-all-trades friend Bert on a series of fantastical adventures involving chalk drawings, merry-go-rounds, an old bird woman and a tea party on the ceiling.



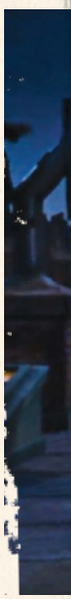


Jane and Michael wanted a nanny with a cheery disposition – and they got one.

"MARY POPPINS ISN'T THERE TO SAVE THE CHILDREN; SHE'S THERE TO SAVE MR BANKS"









Julie Andrews won an Academy Award and Golden Globe for her *Poppins* role.





Bert and his fellow chimney sweeps like to party on the rooftops of London.

CLASSIC QUOTES

"WINDS IN THE EAST, MIST COMING IN, LIKE SOMETHING IS BREWING AND ABOUT TO BEGIN"
BERT

"I'M SORRY, DEAR, BUT WHEN I CHOSE KATIE NANA, I THOUGHT SHE WOULD BE FIRM WITH THE CHILDREN. SHE LOOKED SO SOLEMN AND CROSS"
MRS BANKS

"MARY POPPINS, PRACTICALLY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY"
MARY POPPINS

"FIDDLESTICKS, BOY! FEED THE BIRDS AND WHAT HAVE YOU GOT? FAT BIRDS!"
MR DAWES SR

"WE BETTER KEEP AN EYE ON THIS ONE. SHE'S TRICKY"
MICHAEL

"MY DEAR, NEVER CONFUSE EFFICIENCY WITH A LIVER COMPLAINT"
MR BANKS

"OH, GEORGE! YOU DIDN'T JUMP INTO THE RIVER. HOW SENSIBLE OF YOU!"
MRS BANKS

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR, HE'S BEEN FOUND. NO, ALIVE! OR SO I PRESUME; HE'S A-KISSING THE MRS BANKS"
CONSTABLE JONES

"SOMETIMES A PERSON WE LOVE, THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN, CAN'T SEE PAST THE END OF HIS NOSE"
MARY POPPINS

WORLD'S BEST DAD

Film dads that don't need help from Poppins

ROY TOMLIN
MIDNIGHT SPECIAL (2016)



1 Travelling the country at night, confronting state troopers and holding off the army, Roy would do anything to protect his kid.

BIG DADDY
KICK-ASS (2010)



2 He didn't always have the best parenting methods, but his intentions were mostly good. Bonding is the important thing.

KEVIN FLYNN
TRON: LEGACY (2010)



3 To prove his eternal love for his son, Flynn sacrificed himself while staging a heroic rescue. He knew what he was getting into.

out on by a hair's breadth. Having starred in the original 1956 Broadway production of *My Fair Lady* to rave reviews from audiences and critics alike, she was rather hoping that producer Jack L Warner, the head of Warner Bros at the time, would ask her back to play Eliza Doolittle in the big-screen version that was set to premiere in 1964, the same year as *Mary Poppins*.

Disney had seen Andrews in *Camelot*, also on Broadway, in 1960, and became a fan, offering her the part of Poppins. She turned his offer down at first, partly because she was still hanging onto her hopes for Eliza Doolittle, and partly because she also happened to be three months pregnant. Unwilling to let Andrews get away that easily, Disney delayed *Mary Poppins* so that she would have time both to have her baby and star in *My Fair Lady* instead if Warner offered her the leading role.

Andrews gave birth to her first daughter, Emma Walton, in November 1962, but after everything, *My Fair Lady* ended up going in a different direction, casting Audrey Hepburn as Eliza instead. Hepburn's involvement became something of a controversy – theatergoers reckoned Andrews was the perfect choice for the role, and Hepburn didn't quite have Andrews' pipes, causing her singing voice to be dubbed over by regular playback singer Marni Nixon, but Warner opted to cast "a star with a great deal of name recognition". Although she was a hit in the theatre, Andrews had very few TV credits to her name, so fell completely out of the equation. She got to work on *Mary Poppins* in the spring of 1963.

In 1965, *My Fair Lady* beat *Mary Poppins* to the Academy Award for Best Picture, but Julie Andrews took home a Best Actress Oscar and a Best Actress in a Musical or Comedy Golden Globe. At the 22nd





Mr Banks had trouble balancing his work life with his fatherly duties.

Golden Globe Awards ceremony, she flipped Warner Bros the bird in the politest way possible, ending her acceptance speech with, "My thanks to a man who made a wonderful movie and made all this possible in the first place, Mr Jack Warner."

Andrews' *Mary Poppins* co-star, Dick Van Dyke, didn't experience nearly as much drama in the lead-up to him joining the film as Bert. He was cast before he read the script, and subsequently begged for the part of bank owner Mr Dawes Senior too, as he thought it would be hysterical. He even offered to do it for free. Disney was willing to let him, but only if Van Dyke made a substantial donation to Disney's CalArts film school.

Since *Mary Poppins*' release, Van Dyke has been the subject of gentle ribbing from fans for the terrible Cockney accent he adopted for the film. Whenever people jokingly asked him where in England Bert was supposed to be from, he would tell them he was from a little shire in the north where most of the people were from Ohio. In 2014, he said, "I was working with an entire English cast and nobody said a word, not Julie, not anybody said I needed to work on it, so I thought it was alright!"

But terrible accent or not, Van Dyke is an absolute hero as Bert. Unless Van Dyke himself personally wronged you in the past, causing you to uphold a vendetta against him, it's impossible not to smile with him whenever the chimney sweep is on the screen. His pure cheeriness and charisma are intoxicating.

Although he considers *Mary Poppins* the best film he's appeared in, he thought (and





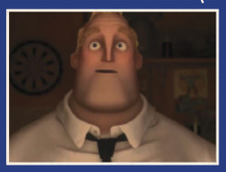
PL Travers didn't want the film to show a romance between Poppins and Bert.

HENRY JONES SENIOR
THE LAST CRUSADE (1989)



4 He's a bit of a lad and a horndog, but Indy's dad always had his son's best interests at heart. The pair of them are aspiration.

BOB PARR
THE INCREDIBLES (2004)



5 Bob struggled during hard times, but once the suit was back on he determinedly fought for his family.

still thinks) that he was somewhat miscast, and has suggested that Jim Dale or Ron Moody would both have been a better fit for the role. But we all know that's BS; even with Van Dyke's fan-casting, we still can't imagine anyone, not Dale nor Moody, playing the part better than him. People like to say that an actor is only as good as the part he plays, but Van Dyke made Bert come to life in a way that no one else could. The singing, the dancing, the cheeky chimney sweep grin, even the endearingly bad accent… he's just perfect.

More than 50 years later, he is somehow still resurrecting Bert every other day. Nine out of ten times that Van Dyke crops up in the news, it's because he's been involved in a 'Step In Time'-inspired flash mob, or started a town-wide sing-along of 'Let's Go Fly A Kite'. He's unstoppable.

There's a reason why *Mary Poppins* was one of the most profitable films of the Sixties, and why it features on many a 'most loved films' list. It's magical. There's something about it, something about the Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke dream team that's just irresistible.

Mary Poppins is out now on Blu-ray and DVD, distributed by Walt Disney.



"I WAS WORKING WITH AN ENTIRE ENGLISH CAST AND NOBODY SAID A WORD, SO I THOUGHT IT WAS ALRIGHT!"
DICK VAN DYKE



©Getty

There's nothing like flying a kite to bring a family together.



WATCH FIRST



THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939)
Dorothy Gale is transported to the world of Oz in this timeless musical about courage and friendship.

WATCH NEXT



NANNY MCPHEE (2002)
A magical governess is hired by a struggling single father to help a family of naughty children behave.



YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC
WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"It was totally a sci-fi movie, LOL! I think she was an alien with anti-gravity shoes." **@imcorinnemec**



"The carpet bag was absolutely TARDIS technology." **@CaptainGrammar**



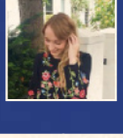
"Amazing film, watched it every weekend when I was young. Complete escapism and great songs. Very worried the sequel will spoil the memory." **@Red_Dwarf_Posse**



"I first learned the word 'suffragette' from *Mary Poppins* and for that, I'm grateful. Love this film!" **@jowana**



"It's my most watched film, I love the combination of theatricality, magic and serious topics! Sister Suffragettes!" **@PasmineJalmer**



"A huge, huge favourite. Fills me with such complete joy and is the reason I began to believe in magic. Also, I *love* me some Bert." **@seastruck**

INTERVIEW

PIPER LAURIE ON TWIN PEAKS & CARRIE

WITH A CAREER SPANNING OVER 60 YEARS, PIPER LAURIE HAS MADE AN INDELIBLE IMPRESSION ON BOTH THE SMALL AND BIG SCREEN AS SISSY SPACEK'S DERANGED MOTHER IN BRIAN DE PALMA'S CARRIE AND AS THE SCHEMING CATHERINE MARTELL IN TWIN PEAKS. WE SPOKE TO HER ABOUT HOW MUCH FUN SHE HAS PLAYING UNHINGED CHARACTERS…

WORDS **OLIVER PFEIFFER**

Actors who become known for genre can oftentimes only have a few titles to their name, but Piper Laurie is a true legend of sci-fi and horror, from her appearance in the original adaptation of Stephen King's *Carrie* to the iconic *Twin Peaks*. We caught up with her to discuss her impressive resumé and her ex-husband being present for her beheading.

Is it true that you originally approached the role of Margaret White as a comedic part?
I wasn't crazy about the script or the part originally, and it was suggested to me that Brian De Palma had a comedic approach to everything he did, so I re-read it with that in mind. I thought of it as satirical, as there was this funny physicality in several scenes. When it came to doing rehearsals with Sissy [Spacek], I did this thing that I thought would be funny. However, Brian stopped me and said, "Piper, you can't do that, you're going to get a laugh!" I wasn't sure whether he was serious, but he was, and I realised for the first time that I should be serious too. However, I didn't change my interpretation much – I just tried to find a reality in what I was doing.

Despite what she is like and the torment she puts her troubled daughter through, you end up feeling a little sorry for her.
I thought she was very passionate about her religious beliefs and her hopes for her daughter. She was just blinded by her passion, and I think that releasing her daughter into the nest was a great reward for her. As a nice Jewish girl, it was hard for me to jump to another religion, but I can understand how someone can feel very deeply about something that can go haywire and get too extreme. I think that she was sincere in her religion, and that she was afraid for her daughter.



Despite the darkness of the subject matter, Laurie describes her role as Margaret White in *Carrie* as "great fun".

It was such a dramatic death, with all the utensils stabbing her. How was it filmed?
It was great fun, I never laughed so much in my life! The prop man had a wire benched from these little wooden blocks under my chest, with wires coming through my gown that led across about 15 feet. Each of those tools would be put on individually, and then in slow motion they would come bobbing across this wire and take a minute or two for each of them to travel. When they struck me that was my cue to respond, react, verbally or whatever. As soon as they called "Cut!" I roared with laughter, because it was really hard to control myself while watching these silly things coming at me so slowly. It was interesting and great fun.

The character appears to be getting a kick out of it somehow; her expression is less pain and more like a sexual release…
Before we shot the scene, I said to Brian that I thought this was a joyous experience. Pleasurable. He liked the idea, so I just went with it. It was a little exaggerated, but… why not! [laughs]

What was it like working with Brian De Palma back then?
I hadn't worked with a director for 15 years at the time, and I thought he was lovely. The first day I met him he reminded me of a young rabbi – he had a beard, and was very laid back with me, and was nothing but affirmative, except for telling me that one time I shouldn't do anything that's funny. I found him very open to suggestions, which was nice because it's awful to try something a bit wild and then be shut ▷▷



"I CHOSE TO BE A JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN BECAUSE AT THE TIME IT SEEMED LESS PREDICTABLE"
PIPER LAURIE



Despite a colourful turn, Laurie (centre) unfortunately won't be returning for David Lynch's latest series.

down in the middle of it. It was nice that he gave me permission. Part of that was because before the movie was to shoot, I went to see [De Palma's comedy fantasy musical] *Phantom Of The Paradise*, and I was struck by how operatic it was. That really gave me the freedom to be big.

You later played Catherine Martell in *Twin Peaks*. How were you approached for the role?
She didn't really exist. David Lynch had decided he wanted me to be in the pilot, and in the script my part only had a line or two. I wasn't interested in doing a series, but I was interested in working with David Lynch, therefore I wasn't concerned, and had fun doing my few lines. I was shocked when I found out we were going to a series and that I was committed contractually. I don't think they knew what to write for me, and they were just sort of winging it, so I never knew what was coming until I'd get the script. I just did it by instinct, and I had no particular plan until the end of the first season.



Despite her status as a cinematic villain, Laurie views Margaret a bit more sympathetically.

Catherine is presumed dead at the end of Season One, but she returns disguised as a Japanese businessman for Season Two. Is it true you went undercover on set?
David said to me, "Your character is now burning up in the sawmill, and the audience doesn't know if you're going to survive or not. I want you to think of a male character that you can be disguised as. Catherine will sneak back into town and create a lot of problems for your husband and with the man she's having an affair with." He said, "I want you to be some sort of businessman, maybe Mexican or French… think of what man you'd like to be, and when we come back in the new season that is who you'll be, and we'll take your name off the credits and no one will no who you are. Don't tell you family or agent or anyone!" I chose to be a Japanese businessman because at the time it seemed less predictable. It was the most fun I've had!

Was it true that Jack Nance, who played your on-screen husband, wasn't aware that you were beneath the make-up until much later?
He didn't know until he got the script in which my character reveals herself. Jack was a lovely man, and there was something so innocent about him. It was typical that he wouldn't have thought it was me.

How did he react when he found out it was you?
Well, we used to have these little get-togethers every month at restaurants, and the new script had just been handed out. He came up to me and pretended to be very angry, but he wasn't at all.

And it was such a gravelly voice that you put on. How did you do that?

PIPER LAURIE'S GREATEST HITS

Her best moments in horror, fantasy and sci-fi

CARRIE (1976)



1 A knife-wielding Margaret White is a terrifying prospect, and one that we're subjected to during the heart-stopping climax of Brian De Palma's original Stephen King adaptation.

TWIN PEAKS (1990-91)



2 The surprise reveal that the Japanese businessman, Mr Tojamura, was in fact Catherine Martell in disguise all along was a jaw-dropping revelation for the audience and characters.

TRAUMA (1993)



3 In another colourful portrayal, Laurie played a sinister clairvoyant who succumbs to a grisly beheading in this overlooked gem from giallo horror legend Dario Argento.

THE FACULTY (1998)



4 Laurie plays a creepy alien teacher, who in a key opening scene stabs the principal (Bebe Neuwirth) to death with a pair of scissors in front of a young Elijah Wood. "I always wanted to do that!" she purrs.

© 2012 Twin Peaks Productions Inc. All rights reserved.



Presumed dead, Catherine returned disguised as a mysterious Japanese businessman in the second season of *Twin Peaks*.

"AS SOON AS THEY CUT I HAD TO RELEASE MY LAUGHTER, AS I REALISED WHAT I WAS DOING WAS SO STUPID"

PIPER LAURIE

I thought they would have some sort of electronic equipment to alter my voice, but when I showed up on the set there was nothing. I was just stuck having to create something that was very hard on my voice. I still don't think that I've recovered after all these years!

You're not returning for the new series, although you wrote to Lynch to make your interest known. Did you hear back from him?
They said they would be delighted to work with me again, but they didn't know what direction they were going in or what they were going to do [with my character]. In retrospect I think that they're probably focusing on the darker aspects of the show, and Catherine wasn't really involved in that. I would be very surprised if they came up with something that made sense for my character.

There wasn't really any closure for your character at the end of the original series.
No, and it was disappointing, because the network was putting a lot of pressure on David to resolve the three or four story elements that he had been writing since Season One, and they were getting impatient. They had a quick-reveal scene with me and Jack Nance, but they didn't really have the fun that they could have had. It was just done, and that was disappointing.

Have you ever thought about what Catherine would be up to now?
I haven't the foggiest. I would have just been perfectly satisfied and accepted whatever David and Mark [Frost]'s crazy imagination would have come up with.

It would be nice to find out this is another *Twin Peaks* hoax, and that you are in fact returning for the new series...
Well, if they have that planned then they haven't included me in on it! I think they wanted something for Joan Chen (who played Catherine's feuding sister-in-law rival) and me to do together, but I think they just haven't found a way to work it in. Our scenes and relationships had a very different tone than the other parts of the show. There wasn't really anything supernatural or mysterious or evil (in my storylines). It was just sort of fun, which was fine with me.

The film *Trauma* was quite a different production again. This time you worked with the 'Italian Hitchcock', Dario Argento. What was he like, and did you enjoy the part?
He was lovely. His English was not terrific, but we understood each other. Every once in a while I see a snippet of the movie on television, and it makes me crazy. They just focus on the horribleness of it. To me I look like this crazy lady that is always hysterical. A little bit of that is funny to me. It was great fun, though – I played a clairvoyant. I played her very seriously, but as soon as they cut I had to release my laughter, as I realised what I was doing was so stupid [laughs].

You've played some very diverse parts, but for some it's these unhinged characters that you'll always be remembered for. Why do you feel you get picked for such parts?
It's copycat stuff. If you become successful in something,

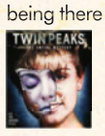


other directors or casting people look for you to do it again, and it's hard to resist sometimes.

More recently you were part of an alien teacher ensemble in *The Faculty*, directed by Robert Rodriguez. What was that like to work on?
That was wonderful. They had a huge budget, and they treated everyone very well. So many of the movies I've done didn't have huge budgets, and had just enough to get through. *The Faculty* was fun, and it wasn't until years later that I realised I'd worked with Jon Stewart, and that he was in the movie. I watched the movie again, and realised he was there, and had some sort of pen stuck in his eyeball! Ooh, horrible!

What was Robert Rodriguez like to work with?
I loved working with him. Such boldness and adventurousness – you never knew where the camera was going to be.

You obviously enjoy working in this genre, as you clearly have a lot of fun doing it...
Yes, I have a lot of laughs, and more than I do in regular life. As a matter of fact, with *Trauma,* my ex-husband came to the set, and it was coincidentally the day that my character was to be beheaded. My ex-husband and I are perfectly wonderful friends, but the idea of us being there together for that was funny!



Twin Peaks: The Entire Mystery is available to buy on Blu-ray now, distributed by Paramount Home Entertainment.



Laurie (left) played a creepy alien teacher alongside Salma Hayek and Robert Patrick in 1998's *The Faculty*.

THE SCIFINOW BEWITCHED QUIZ

IS YOUR BEWITCHED KNOWLEDGE MAGICAL, OR DID YOU ACCIDENTALLY TAKE AN IDIOT POTION? FIND OUT WITH OUR QUIZ!

FAMILY AFFAIR

1. What is Samantha and Darrin Stephens' address?
2. What did Samantha attempt to give up when she married Darrin?
3. What are the names of Samantha and Darrin's two children?
4. How is Endora related to Samantha?
5. What is unusual about Samantha's cousin Serena's appearance?

GET SMART

6. What kind of pies do the characters use in a pie fight in the episode 'Double, Double, Toil And Trouble'?
7. What is the name of Darrin's advertising agency?
8. Who is Samantha's closest mortal friend?
9. What does Aunt Clara collect, and have over 1,000 of?
10. What title does Samantha earn in Season Four?

HE & SHE

11. What is the name of the Stephens' nosy neighbour who suspects that Samantha is a witch?
12. How does Sheila know the Stephens family?
13. What does Samantha often do with her face when she casts a spell?
14. Which of the following historical figures never appeared on the show: Queen Victoria, George Washington or William Shakespeare?
15. What does the show call the male equivalents of witches?

GOOD MORNING, WORLD

16. Which channel originally broadcast *Bewitched*?
17. In which year did Bewitched's first season air?
18. Which Dick played Darrin Stephens first: York or Sargent?
19. How many episodes of *Bewitched* are there?
20. Who played Samantha Stephens?

DIDN'T HE/SHE DO WELL! See how you did with our arbitrary scoring system



16-20

SAMANTHA

What a great sport you are. You always have your family's back, and can get yourself out of tricky situations. You may slip up a couple of times along the way, but you always get back on your feet in the end.

11-15

DARRIN

Though you can be a little hot-headed and you're not in everyone's good books, you're there to help out those that matter to you when times get tough. That's all anyone really wants from a quizmate.

6-10

ENDORA

Nothing is worth doing unless you get to do it your way, but that's not necessarily a good thing. You never play by the rules, and a lot of people suffer for it. That's not the way of the quiz.

0-5

LARRY

Your obsession with making money gets in the way of doing the right thing, and your peers think you're an emotionless robot, but you're just good at hiding the smidge of humanity you do have.

ANSWERS: **1.** 1164 MORNING GLORY CIRCLE **2.** USING HER POWERS **3.** TABITHA AND ADAM **4.** SHE'S HER MOTHER **5.** SHE'S ALMOST IDENTICAL TO SAMANTHA, EXCEPT FOR A TATTOO UNDER HER LEFT EYE **6.** LEMON MERINGUE PIES **7.** MCMANN AND TATE **8.** LOUISE TATE **9.** DOORKNOBS **10.** THE QUEEN OF WITCHES **11.** GLADYS KRAVITZ **12.** SHE'S DARRIN'S FORMER FIANCÉE **13.** SHE TWITCHES HER NOSE **14.** WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE **15.** WARLOCKS **16.** ABC **17.** 1964 **18.** YORK **19.** 254 **20.** ELIZABETH MONTGOMERY

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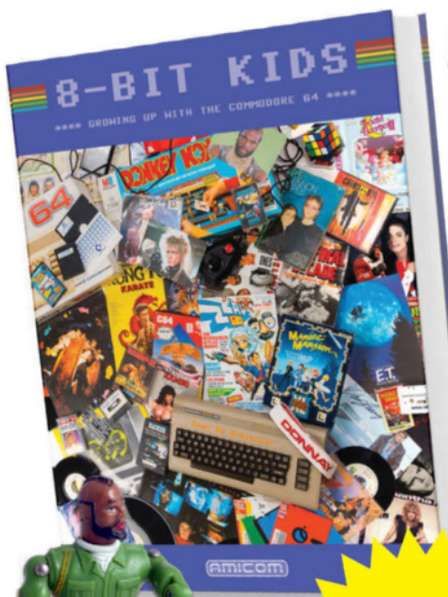
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